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ABSTRACT

This "toolkit" is intended to provide educators, administrators, and family members with an overview of assessment accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities and to be used as a staff development tool. The toolkit is organized into five parts. An introductory section provides an overview of the toolkit. A 15-minute videotape looks at commonly used assessment accommodations from the perspectives of practitioners, policymakers, administrators, and parents. The Practitioner's Guide section briefly describes the most commonly used accommodations in five areas: timing, scheduling, setting, presentation, and response. The Administrator's Guide section includes a discussion of implementation along with examples of schools that have made assessment accommodations for students with disabilities. A pamphlet to share with family members is also included in this section. The final section presents suggestions and ideas for using the toolkit in staff development sessions for small study groups. An appendix provides material suitable for overhead presentation or as handouts. (DB)

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Making Assessment Accommodations

A Toolkit for Educators

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The Associations of Service Providers Implementing IDEA Reforms in Education Partnership (ASPIRE) and the IDEA Local Implementation by Local Administrators Partnership (ILIAD) Projects at The Council for Exceptional Children are leadership initiatives. As members of the IDEA Partnerships Project, ASPIRE and ILIAD work with the Families and Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE) and The Policymaker Partnership (PMP). Funding for the IDEA Partnership Projects comes from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (Cooperative Agreements No. H326A80006 and H326A80005). This document was reviewed by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), the OSEP Project Officer, and the ASPIRE and ILIAD Project Directors for consistency with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of other organizations imply endorsement by those organizations or the U.S. Government.

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Acknowledgments

Making Assessment Accommodations: A Toolkit for Educators

The ASPIRE and ILIAD IDEA Partnerships express sincere thanks to the associations who provided support and expertise in the development of this toolkit. The Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, the National Education Association, and the National Association of School Psychologists provided representatives on the development team, access to professionals in the field and many other resources.

Additionally, we acknowledge the expertise and leadership provided by Dr. Martha Thurlow and staff at the National Center on Educational Outcomes at the University of Minnesota, and the guidance of Dr. Margaret McLaughlin at the University of Maryland. Both provided a synergy that was necessary to build a multifaceted resource such as this. Finally, we acknowledge the vision and talent of Dr. Christine Mason who assisted with development.

Warger, Eavy & Associates, an educational communications firm in Reston, VA, wrote and produced the toolkit.

ASPIRE—Associations of Service Providers Implementing IDEA Reforms in Education

ILIAD—IDEA Local Implementation by Local Administrators Partnership

The ASPIRE and ILIAD Partnership Projects involve educational, related services, and local administrator associations, who work together to provide needed information, ideas, and technical assistance to implement the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA '97). The development of this publication was supported by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. All materials disseminated from these partnerships have been reviewed by the Office of Special Education Programs.

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction 1

Making Assessment Accommodations for Students with Disabilities 1
Purpose of the Toolkit 3
How To Use *Making Assessment Accommodations: A Toolkit for Educators* 4
Moving Forward 5
References and Resources 6

2. A Guide for Practitioners 13

Making Assessment Accommodations 13
About Assessment Accommodations 15
Timing Accommodations 16
Scheduling Accommodations 20
Setting Accommodations 20
Presentation Accommodations 21
Response Accommodations 23
Other Accommodations 24
Making Assessment Accommodations: Suggestions From Practitioners 24
Conclusion 27
References & Acknowledgments 30
Accommodations Table of Contents 31

3. A Guide for Administrators 57

Supporting the Implementation of Assessment Accommodations 57
Setting the Tone 58
Demonstrating a Working Knowledge of Accommodations 59
Supporting the Implementation of Assessment Accommodations 66
Conclusion 82
References, Resources & Acknowledgments 84

4. Staff Development Activities 93

A Guide for Facilitators 93
Getting Started 94
Planning the Session 95
What Are Assessment Accommodations and Why Are They Requested for Students? 97
What Types of Accommodations Are Available and What Principles Guide Decisions? 103
How Can Administrators Support Staff With Implementation? 105
APPENDIX 109

SECTION 1

Introduction

Making Assessment Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Parents, community members, administrators, policymakers, and educators expect to know how well children are learning. In many states and school districts across the nation, large-scale assessments are a major part of accountability. These assessments help educators gauge how well students are achieving to high standards.

State and district-wide assessments of student achievement and accountability systems must include all students — including students with disabilities. Accountability underlies standards; it provides an important impetus for change and educational reform. State and district-wide assessments provide the foundation of many accountability systems.

There are many reasons to include students with disabilities in accountability systems. Among the most commonly cited reasons are:

- **To provide an accurate picture of student achievement.** If state and district-wide general assessments of student achievement are to provide a complete picture of all students in a particular grade, all students must be able to participate in the assessments, and the scores for all students must be reported.

- **To make accurate comparisons.** If accurate comparisons are to be made, all districts, and all states, must include all students in the comparison population.
- **To ensure that students with disabilities benefit from reforms.** Large-scale assessment results often provide the basis for state and district-wide policy decisions about curriculum or resource allocations.

Including students with disabilities in state and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations, where necessary, became a requirement in the 1997 Reauthorization of the ***Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*** (IDEA) by the IDEA Amendments of 1997. [20 U.S.C. §1400 et. seq. and P.L. 105-17] Requirements include:

- As a condition of eligibility, states must have policies and procedures to ensure that children with disabilities are included in general state and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations and modifications in administration as necessary. [20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(17)(A) and 34 CFR §300.138 (a)]
- Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) must include a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of state or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed for the student to participate in such assessments. [20U.S.C. §1414(d)(1)(A)(v)(I) and 34 CFR §300.347(a)(5)(i)]
- If the IEP team determines that the child will not participate in a particular state or district-wide assessment of student achievement (or part of such assessment), the IEP must include a statement of why that assessment is not appropriate for the child, and how the child will be assessed. [20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(1)(A)(v)(I)(A) and 34 CFR §300.347(a)(5)(ii)]
- For students whose IEPs specify that they should not participate in regular assessments, the state must ensure development of guidelines for their participation in alternate assessments and develop and conduct alternate assessments by July 1, 2000. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(17)(A)(i)-(ii) and 34 CFR §300.138(b)]
- States must have reporting policies and procedures in place that ensure proper reporting of information regarding the performance of students with disabilities on state and district-wide assessments. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(17)(B) and 34 CFR §300.139]

All students with disabilities are expected to participate in state and district-wide assessments in one of the following ways:

- Some students with disabilities will participate in the same way as other students. They will take regular state or district assessments of student achievement with no accommodations or modifications in test administration.
- Some students with disabilities will participate in regular assessments of student achievement using appropriate accommodations or modifications in test administration that enable them to demonstrate their skills

without the interference of their disabilities.

- If IEP teams make decisions about the use of accommodations and modifications (including individual modifications in test administration, as appropriate), it should be necessary for a relatively small percentage of students with disabilities to participate in alternate assessments because they have significant disabilities that require supports and a different instructional focus.

Assessment accommodations alter the way the student takes the test. They are designed to respond to a student need (i.e., the student requires an accommodation in order to complete the test). They are not intended to give the student an unfair advantage. Students with disabilities use assessment accommodations to demonstrate their knowledge without being impeded by their disabilities. The individualized determinations of whether a student will participate in a particular assessment, and what accommodations or modifications in test administration, if any, are appropriate should be addressed through the IEP process. [34 CFR §300.347 (a)(5)] Most states recognize the importance of the IEP and the IEP team in making decisions about accommodations for individual students. Because state and district-wide assessment programs are closely aligned with state and local accountability and reform efforts, flexibility is allowed for states and local education agencies to appropriately include students with disabilities in state and district-wide assessment programs, and only minimum regulations have been included in the federal regulations regarding how public agencies provide for the participation of these students.

Purpose of the Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to provide an overview of assessment accommodations and modifications to practitioners — administrators, general education teachers, special education teachers, school psychologists, related service personnel, and paraeducators — who are working in collaboration with families. It also is designed to support the work of paraeducators who may be helping to prepare and locate accommodations.

The terms *assessment accommodation* or *assessment accommodations and modifications* are used throughout this toolkit to refer to a change in how a test is presented or how the test taker responds. These changes do not change the content of what is being measured. Although technically, the term *accommodation* often is used to describe a change in how the test taker responds and the term *modification* is used to describe a change in how the test is presented, we have chosen not to make that distinction in this toolkit. For the purposes of this toolkit only, the terms — *accommodation* and *modification* — are used interchangeably.

The ***Making Assessment Accommodations*** toolkit is designed to provide practitioners and family members with answers to the following questions:

- What are assessment accommodations and why do some students require them?

- What types of assessment accommodations are available?
- What principles guide assessment accommodation decisions?
- How can administrators support staff members in making assessment accommodations?

The accommodations featured in this toolkit are appropriate for a wide array of testing situations — both for formal assessments that are tied to state standards and for district-wide achievement tests. States and districts are taking different approaches to assessment in relation to performance standards — some are relying on norm-referenced assessments while others are designing their own tests. While these tests often are the traditional paper-and-pencil variety, others are designed to measure performance through completion of an activity. The key is to match the accommodation to the type of test. The accommodations discussed in this toolkit are appropriate for criterion-referenced, norm-referenced, and performance-based assessments.

How To Use *Making Assessment Accommodations: A Toolkit for Educators*

The *Making Assessment Accommodations* toolkit is designed to assist practitioners in understanding accommodations for large-scale assessments. Although many teachers and special service providers have been using accommodations in their daily practice, the IDEA requirement regarding the participation of students with disabilities in general state and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations and modifications in test administration, where necessary, is relatively new. The toolkit provides a starting point for developing an awareness about the topic.

To this end, *Making Assessment Accommodations* is intended to be used as a staff development tool. There are many ways to use this guide for professional development, including:

- **Self study.** Individuals may use the materials to learn and enhance their knowledge base. Individuals are encouraged to review the materials and discuss the information with colleagues.
- **Team study.** A growing trend in schools is to support teams of practitioners with like interests in developing their knowledge and skills in areas of special interest. The toolkit may be used in both informal and formal team meetings — including IEP teams, subject area departments, school improvement teams, or teacher collegial work groups — to enhance and extend knowledge. In this context, the toolkit can serve as a stimulus for teams to learn about assessment accommodations and to apply the knowledge to their own situations.
- **Staff meetings.** Administrators, special educators, or related service personnel may use the toolkit in staff meetings. For example, the videotape overview provides an excellent starting point for discussion of the issue. Handouts and transparency masters that can be used for overheads are included in the staff development activities section.

- **Workshops.** The staff development activities section outlines suggestions for creating a professional development workshop on making assessment accommodations. Suggestions and ideas are included that will help workshop leaders tailor the workshop to the individual needs of the group.
- **University courses.** Faculty members who work with preservice and inservice teachers, related service personnel, and administrators may use the materials in their courses. Suggestions and ideas are included that will help faculty members tailor a session that is aligned with course objectives.

The *Making Assessment Accommodations* toolkit is organized into five parts:

- **Introduction.** This section provides an overview of the toolkit.
- **Videotape.** The videotape (approximately 15 minutes) provides an overview of the topic. It looks at commonly used assessment accommodations. Practitioners, policymakers, administrators, and parents share their views about the value of making accommodations for students with disabilities.
- **Practitioner's Guide.** This section presents an overview of assessment accommodations. It briefly describes some of the most commonly used accommodations in five areas: timing, scheduling, setting, presentation, and response.
- **Administrator's Guide.** This section presents an overview of assessment accommodations for principals. It includes a discussion of implementation considerations along with examples from schools that have made assessment accommodations for students with disabilities, as well as a pamphlet that can be shared with family members. While this section is targeted for principals, it contains useful information for all administrators — special education directors, subject area chairpersons, assistant superintendents, curriculum directors, and chief accountability officers.
- **Staff Development Activities.** This section presents suggestions and ideas for using the *Making Assessment Accommodations* toolkit in staff development sessions or small study groups.

Moving Forward

Before moving on, take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the toolkit. Watch the video and read through the sections to gain an overview of the variety of tools and information they contain. You might want to review the glossary of terms at the end of this section.

If educators and policymakers are to know for certain what all students know and can do, they must measure the performance of all students. Providing accommodations to students who need them increases the number of students with disabilities who can participate in general state and district-wide assessment programs and thus be included in the accountability system. Assessment accommodations move us one step closer to ensuring that all students achieve to high standards.

References and Resources

This section offers suggestions for where to obtain additional information.

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Resources

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 20191
(888) 232-7733 (toll-free)

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities, students with disabilities, and/or the gifted. CEC serves as the lead organization for two of the four IDEA Partnership Projects described below. Both the ASPIIRE and ILIAD Partnership Projects are located at CEC. Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, the IDEA Partnership Projects bring professional organizations together to deliver a common message about IDEA '97. These projects are working with their partners to build capacity in meeting member needs around IDEA implementation.

- **Associations of Service Providers Implementing IDEA Reforms in Education** (ASPIIRE)

  The ASPIIRE Project brings together teachers and other service providers to help educational programs implement the requirements of IDEA '97. ASPIIRE answers questions, keeps educators informed about what works, enhances outreach and widespread dissemination to 3 million educators and related service providers, and supports efforts to help all children learn.

  (877) CEC-IDEA (toll free)

  www.ideapractices.org

- **IDEA Local Implementation by Local Administrators** (ILIAD)

  The ILIAD Partnership increases the knowledge and supports the efforts of local administrators by addressing the general requirements of IDEA '97. It also addresses positive behavioral supports and management of discipline concerns, access to the general curriculum, and strategies for collaboration.

  (877) CEC-IDEA (toll free)

  www.ideapractices.org

- **Families and Advocates Partnership for Education** (FAPE)

  The FAPE Project is a partnership linking families, advocates, and self-advocates to communicate the new focus of IDEA '97. FAPE helps parents and advocates by providing written information on IDEA '97, training at workshops and through other venues, and by making referrals to other parent training organizations.

  (888) 248-0822 (toll free)

  www.fape.org

- **Policymaker Partnership** (PMP)

  The PMP Project increases the capacity of policymakers to act as informed change agents who are focused on improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities. PMP works to infuse special education issues in all areas of educational decision making, consider policy im-

plication of IDEA '97, communicate relevant research to policymakers, foster collaboration among policymakers, and disseminate the results of effective and promising practices.

(877) IDEA-INFO (toll free)

www.ideapolicy.org

National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO)

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350 Elliott Hall
75 East River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 624-8561

www.coled.umn.edu/NCEO

The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) has a series of publications related to the topic of making assessment accommodations. ***Policy Directions*** features brief updates and discussions of issues related to assessment accommodations. Examples include:

- Increasing the participation of students with disabilities in state and district assessments (1997).
- Providing assessment accommodations (1997).
- Reporting educational results for students with disabilities (1997).
- Alternate assessments for students with disabilities (1996).

In addition, NCEO prepares reports. Selected titles include:

Elliott, J., Thurlow, M., & Ysseldyke, J. (1996). ***Assessment guidelines that maximize the participation of students with disabilities in large-scale assessments: Characteristics and considerations*** (Synthesis Report 25).

Langenfeld, K., Thurlow, M., & Scott, D. (1997). ***High stakes testing for students: Unanswered questions and implications for students with disabilities*** (Synthesis Report 26).

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Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)

One Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001

www.ccsso.org/seamenu.html

Many states post current assessment information on their education agency's web site. Links to these web sites are available through CCSSO's web site.

National Association of School Psychologists

4340 East West Highway, Suite 402
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 657-0270
www.naspweb.org

NASP provides supports for school personnel and families focusing on important school issues such as grade retention, best practices in assessment, classroom management, conflict resolution, and social skills training.

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)

P.O. Box 1492
Washington, DC 20013
(800) 695-0285
www.nichcy.org

NICHCY publishes numerous documents related to serving children with special needs for practitioners and family members.

Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative (USELC)

Education Development Center, Inc.
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www.edc.org/collaborative

USELC provides technical assistance to urban school districts and is involved in contemporary special education issues. USELC's leadership development includes areas such as assessment and evaluation and accountability issues.

Glossary

Accountability — State assessments are the foundation of many accountability systems, both those directed toward schools and their staff and those directed toward students, such as diplomas and promotion requirements.

Alternate Assessment — If the IEP team determines that a child will not participate in a particular state or district-wide assessment of student achievement (or part of such assessment), the IEP must include a statement of why that assessment is not appropriate for the child and how the child will be assessed. [34 CFR §300.347(a)(5)(i)] For students whose IEPs specify that they should not participate in regular assessments, the state must ensure development of guidelines for their participation in alternate assessments and develop and conduct alternate assessments by July 1, 2000. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(17)(A)(i)-(ii) and 34 CFR §300.138(b)]

Glossary (continued)

Assessment Accommodation

A change in how a test is presented or how the test taker responds, which may include changes in the presentation format, response format, test setting, timing, or scheduling. This term generally refers to changes that do not significantly alter what the test measures. It results from a student need; it is not intended to give the student an unfair advantage. In 1997, IDEA was reauthorized (P.L. 105-17). IDEA provides assistance to states, and through them to local school districts, to assist in providing a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to children with disabilities who are determined eligible for services under the IDEA residing in the state in mandatory age ranges. One of its associated purposes is to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities. [20 U.S.C. §1400(d)(4) and 34 CFR §300.1(d)] One of the provisions central to this purpose is the requirement at §300.138(a), that requires states to demonstrate that students with disabilities are included in general state and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations and modifications in administration, if necessary.

Assistive Technology Devices

As defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), this term refers to a broad range of devices designed to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. [20 U.S.C. §1401(1) and 34 CFR §300.5] Assistive technology devices may include equipment or product systems. IDEA '97 requires that assistive technology devices and services be considered for all students with disabilities in the development of their IEPs. [20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(3)(B)(v) and 34 CFR §300.346(a)(2)(v)]

Glossary (continued)

Assistive Technology Service

Students who use assistive technology devices may need a range of services that directly assist that student with the selection, acquisition, or use of the device. Such services may include evaluation; the actual purchase, lease, or acquisition of assistive devices; as well as the services needed to select, design, fit, customize, adapt, maintain, repair, or replace assistive technology devices. Assistive technology services also may include the coordination and use of other therapies, interventions, or services with the assistive technology device, and training that may be needed for the student, the student's family, professionals, employers, or other service providers involved in the student's major life functions. [20 U.S.C. §1401(2) and 34 CFR §300.6]

High Stakes Assessment

Increasingly, schools are administering state and/or district-wide tests, often referred to as "high stakes tests," that have important consequences for students, staff, or schools. For example, some states require students to pass one or more state assessments in order to be promoted or to receive a high school diploma. Some states base school accreditation on test results.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

In 1997, IDEA was reauthorized (P.L. 105-17). The IDEA Amendments of 1997 (IDEA '97) require states receiving IDEA funds to ensure that a free appropriate public education is made available to children with disabilities in mandatory age ranges in the least restrictive environment. One of the major emphases in the reauthorization of IDEA is that students with disabilities must have access to the general curriculum, that is, the same curriculum as for nondisabled students and be held to challenging performance standards. Thus, the provisions in IDEA '97 regarding the participation of students with disabilities in general state and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations and modifications in administration, where necessary, promote these important statutory purposes. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(17)(A) and 34 CFR §300.138(a)]

Glossary (continued)

Large-scale Assessment	Many states and districts use large-scale, standards-based assessments for all students in public schools. Large-scale assessments are used to show how students are performing against state standards or national norms, and to hold school districts accountable for student performance. Assessments typically vary across states. Large-scale general assessments typically measure knowledge in broad content areas, rather than specific skills usually represented by IEP goals.
Modification	The terms *assessment accommodation* or *assessment accommodations and modifications* are used throughout this toolkit to refer to a change in how a test is presented or how the test taker responds. These changes do not change the content of what is being measured. Although technically, the term *accommodation* often is used to describe a change in how the test taker responds and the term *modification* is used to describe a change in how the test is presented, we have chosen not to make that distinction in this toolkit. For the purposes of this toolkit only, the terms — *accommodation* and *modification* — are used interchangeably.

SECTION 2

A Guide for Practitioners

Making Assessment Accommodations

States recognize the importance of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the IEP team in making decisions about accommodations for individual students. Consider the following examples.

Brittany is a conscientious high school student with visual-motor coordination difficulties. In the classroom, her disability interferes with her ability to transfer information from the chalkboard or overhead to a paper on her desk. It also is hard for her to copy information from a book onto a piece of paper; typically, she loses her place in the book. One of the accommodations that Brittany's teacher has found helpful is to let Brittany write all answers in her textbook or activity book, rather than on a separate sheet. Her IEP team uses this information when considering possible accommodations for Brittany on the upcoming state assessment. The team decides there is sufficient evidence that Brittany will not be able to track from a test booklet to a test response form. Because Brittany has been successful using the response accommodation of marking in the actual booklet, the team decides this also is an appropriate accommodation for her on the state test.

Ten-year-old Trevor will be taking the state assessment for the first time. His classroom teacher has expressed a concern to other IEP team members that due to his hyperactivity and distractibility, Trevor will be unable to work continuously for a typically administered portion of the test (15-20 minutes). The team discusses information that documents Trevor's ability to work in a study carrel and his positive response to teacher cues that redirect his attention back to the task. Based on this information, the IEP team decides that Trevor should take the test in a study carrel with teacher prompts. Based on numerous classroom observations, the school psychologist shares his concerns that Trevor's accommodations may distract other students who are taking the test, and he should, therefore, be placed in a separate setting for the assessment. Because the test is not scheduled to happen for 2 months, the classroom teacher agrees to try the following accommodation: Trevor begins using a study carrel during regular classroom assessments. The teacher observes whether these accommodations are distracting to others. The team will make a decision regarding a setting change at the next meeting.

Twelve-year-old Antonio is new to the school this year. In addition to speaking English as a second language, Antonio has a visual disability that limits his ability to see printed text. During class sessions where the assignment is to work in texts and activity books, Antonio uses a magnification device. The IEP team agrees that Antonio should be able to use his magnification device for the statewide test. They also note that Antonio tends to respond better on tests when they are presented in his first language, Spanish. After much discussion, the team decides that Antonio will use the following accommodations: offer Antonio the test in Spanish, have the test prerecorded on audiotape, allow the use of a magnification device, and permit directions to be reread and restated in Spanish.

Mel is an eighth grade student who has difficulty reading. At the beginning of the year, the IEP team considered whether Mel needed any accommodations for the district-wide assessment. After reviewing a sample of the assessment, the team decided that Mel's disability would impede his performance. For example, there was a significant amount of reading involved in the math problem-solving subtests. Overall, the directions for both the reading and math tests were quite comprehensive. On several of the social studies subtests — especially the geography items that asked students to interpret timelines and maps — the reading level required was beyond Mel's current ability. The team considered several accommodations: read the directions and test items for subtests that did not measure reading ability to Mel;

provide the directions and test items on audiotape; give Mel more time to read and complete the test; answer clarification questions about the directions (without giving the answer); and simplify the directions. After much discussion, the team decided that the most efficient option might be to request the test on audiotape. If Mel used headphones, he could complete the test with his classmates. Mel's parent added a caveat — because this accommodation may embarrass Mel, who is very sensitive about his disability and his reading difficulties, he should be asked if he would like to try this accommodation in the classroom for a few months. If Mel is comfortable trying it out, the team should collect data to determine whether the accommodation was beneficial. The team readily agreed to this suggestion, noting that accommodations should always be used in daily instruction and not just during large-scale assessments.

As each of these cases illustrates, assessment accommodations ensure that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know without being impeded by their disabilities. Not all students with disabilities will require assessment accommodations. But for those who do, accommodations would be provided that are needed to meet their disability-related needs without giving them an unfair advantage.

The purpose of this practitioner's guide is to provide an overview of the most commonly used assessment accommodations.

About Assessment Accommodations

The 1997 reauthorization of the ***Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*** (IDEA) and its implementing regulations created a legal requirement to include students with disabilities in general state and district-wide assessment programs, providing appropriate accommodations and modifications in administration where necessary. IEPs must include a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of state or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the child to participate in the assessment. This is true for all students with disabilities under IDEA, unless the IEP team determines — and documents the fact — that the assessment (or part of such assessment) is not appropriate for a student. In this case, the IEP team will determine how the student will be assessed. [34 CFR §300.347(a)(5)(i)-(ii)] Appropriate assessment accommodations are also required for students covered by Section 504 where necessary. [P.L. 93-112, 29 U.S.C. §794 and 34 CFR §104.4]

An assessment accommodation is an alteration in the way a test is administered or the way the student takes a test. While identifying an appropriate accommodation and implementing it successfully may appear complicated at first, many accommodations are sound instructional practices that teachers are already using with students in daily classroom activities. In general, no accommodation should ever be recommended for a student unless that student also has an opportunity to use it during instructional activities. Nor, in general, should an accommodation be

made that alters the standard or performance expectation being measured by the test.

Providing accommodations for large-scale assessments is a relatively new practice for many students with disabilities. In most instances, the IEP team plays a central role in making decisions about accommodations. The team decides who will participate (the law presumes that the student will participate) in the assessment, but a student's IEP team determines who will need an accommodation, and what the accommodation should be. To ensure the validity and integrity of decisions, all IEP team members — general and special education teachers, related service personnel, administrators, parents, and students themselves — should be well informed about accommodations. Team members and other educators in the school community should know what accommodations are, what they look like, how to implement them, and what cautions to consider. Likewise, paraeducators also should be knowledgeable about accommodations, since they are likely to be called upon to prepare and schedule them.

The accommodations presented in this guide are organized into five categories:

- **Timing** — changes in the duration of testing.
- **Scheduling** — changes in when testing occurs.
- **Setting** — changes in the place where an assessment is given.
- **Presentation** — changes in how an assessment is given.
- **Response** — changes in how a student responds to an assessment.

At the end of the section, several accommodations are included to illustrate each category. The list of accommodations is not intended to be all-inclusive. There is no universally approved list of accommodations; those featured here are examples.

As you read through the descriptions, keep in mind that, while the ultimate authority for determining what accommodations are necessary rests with the student's IEP team, most states have an approved list of accommodations. (These can vary widely from one state to the next.) Some test publishers also provide lists of possible accommodations. These lists are intended to provide guidance for the IEP team, so it is a good idea to find out which accommodations are allowed in your state, and the procedures the team must follow when requiring an accommodation that is not on the state-approved list.

Before moving on, take a few minutes to review the guiding principles in Figure 2A. These general rules of thumb have been gleaned from both researchers and practitioners.

Timing Accommodations

Timing accommodations are changes in the duration of testing. They can include changes in how much time is allowed or how the time is organized. Typical questions that an IEP team may ask when considering a student's need for timing accommodations are:

- Can the student work continuously for the entire length of a typically administered portion of the test?

Figure 2A Guiding Principles

Do not assume that every student with disabilities needs assessment accommodations. Accommodations used in assessments should parallel accommodations used in instruction.

Obtain approval by the IEP team. The IEP team must determine the accommodations.

Base accommodations on student need. Accommodations should respond to the needs of the individual student and not be based on the category of the student's disability. Do not base decisions about whether to provide accommodations and what the accommodations should be on educational program placement (e.g., percentage of time the student spends in the general education classroom). While students with the same disability may tend to need the same or similar kinds of accommodations, this is not a sound basis for making decisions.

Be respectful of the student's cultural and ethnic background. When suggesting an accommodation, make sure the student and his or her family are comfortable with it. When working with a student who has limited English proficiency, consideration needs to be given to whether the assessment should be explained to the student in his or her native language or other mode of communication unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.

Integrate assessment accommodations into classroom instruction. Never introduce an unfamiliar accommodation to a student during an assessment. Preferably, the student should use the accommodation as part of regular instruction. At the very least, the student should have ample time to learn and practice using the accommodation prior to the assessment.

Know whether your state and/or district has an approved list of accommodations. Although the ultimate authority for making decisions about what accommodations are appropriate rests with the student's IEP team, many states and districts have prepared a list of officially-approved accommodations. These lists vary widely from district to district or state to state. Generally, there are different documentation procedures depending on whether the accommodation is or is not found on the state-approved/district-approved list. Practitioners and families should consider the state laws and district policies.

- continued -

Figure 2A Guiding Principles (continued)

Plan early for accommodations. Begin consideration of assessment accommodations long before the student will use them, so that he or she has sufficient opportunity to learn and feel comfortable.

Include students in decision making. Whenever possible, include the student in determining an appropriate accommodation. Find out whether the student perceives a need for the accommodation and whether he or she is willing to use it. If a student does not want to use an accommodation (e.g., it is embarrassing or it is too cumbersome to use), the student probably will not use it.

Understand the purpose of the assessment. Select only those accommodations that do not interfere with the intent of the test. For example, if the test measures calculations, a calculator would provide the student with an unfair advantage. However, if the math test measures problem-solving ability, a calculator may be appropriate. Similarly, reading a test to a student would not present an unfair advantage unless the test measures reading ability.

Request only those accommodations that are truly needed. Too many accommodations may overload the student and prove detrimental. When suggesting more than one accommodation, make sure the accommodations are compatible (e.g., do not interfere with each other or cause an undue burden on the student).

Determine if the selected accommodation requires another accommodation. Some accommodations — such as having a test read aloud — may prove distracting for other students, and therefore also may require a setting accommodation.

- continued -

Figure 2A Guiding Principles (continued)

Provide practice opportunities for the student. Many standardized test formats are very different from teacher-made tests. This may pose problems for students. Most tests have sample tests or practice versions. While it is inappropriate to review the actual test with the student, practice tests are designed for this purpose. Teach students test-taking tips, such as knowing how much time is allotted and pacing oneself so as not to spend too much time on one item. Orient students to the test format or types of questions. For example, on multiple-choice tests, encourage students to read each choice carefully, eliminate the wrong choices, and then select their answer.

Remember that accommodations in test taking won't necessarily eliminate frustration for the student. Accommodations allow a student to demonstrate what he or she knows and can do. They are provided to meet a student's disability-related needs, not to give anyone an unfair advantage. Thus, accommodations will not in themselves guarantee a good score for a student or reduce test anxiety or other emotional reactions to the testing situation. Accommodations are intended to level the playing field.

- Does the student use accommodations that require more time to complete individual test items?

Descriptions of selected timing accommodations found at the end of this section include:

- Frequent breaks.
- Extended time.

Needs Addressed

Timing accommodations are requested most often by students who need extra time to read written text, to write their responses, or to use certain equipment. In some cases, timing accommodations help students with short attention spans stay on task.

Some accommodations may require an extended timeframe because they take longer to execute or because they can cause fatigue. For example, the use of magnification equipment, tape recorders, and earphones can cause fatigue, making frequent breaks a necessity.

Special Considerations

Some educators have a tendency to request timing accommodations even when the student may not need them. Timing accommodations should be requested only when necessary, especially since such accommodations may interfere with some students' performance (e.g., the student loses interest).

Scheduling Accommodations

Scheduling accommodations refer to changes that affect when testing occurs — for example, scheduling parts of the assessment over several sessions, scheduling the assessment at a particular time of day, or reordering subtests. Typical questions that an IEP team may ask when considering a student's need for scheduling accommodations are:

- Does the student take medication that interferes with performance during certain times of day?
- Does the student use accommodations that require extended periods of time?

Descriptions of selected scheduling accommodations found at the end of this section include:

- Over several days.
- Order of subtests.
- Specific time of day.

Needs Addressed

Scheduling accommodations may be appropriate when there is a need to coordinate the assessment with the effects of medication or after physical exertion such as physical education or recess. They also may be used for students who have low tolerance for frustration.

Some accommodations may require a change in schedule. For example, if a student requires frequent breaks or additional time to complete the assessment, it may be necessary to extend the assessment or subtest over several sessions or days.

Special Considerations

Scheduling accommodations typically require that the student take the test in a separate setting because the schedule may not coincide with that of the majority of students. Care must be taken to ensure that the student receives appropriate instruction during those times when his or her classmates are engaged in testing. Care also should be taken to ensure that the student is not excluded from important classroom learning activities.

If the student is assigned to take the test with someone other than the classroom teacher, make sure that the student feels comfortable with him or her.

Setting Accommodations

Setting accommodations typically are changes in the place where an assessment is given — for example, administering the test to a small group of students away from the whole group or administering the test individually, perhaps in a study carrel. Setting also can include the use of special acoustics or lighting.

The nature of some accommodations may necessitate a change in setting as well. For example, students who require another person to read the directions aloud or who need to use special equipment may need to take the test in a separate room to avoid distracting other students.

Typical questions that an IEP team may ask when considering a student's need for setting accommodations are:

- Can the student focus on the assessment within the large-group setting?
- Does the student need an accommodation that may require a special setting?
- Does the student need an accommodation that is only available in another setting?

Descriptions of selected setting accommodations found at the end of this section include:

- Preferential seating.
- Separate location.
- Specialized setting.

Needs Addressed

Generally, students need setting accommodations because they have difficulty focusing their attention in a group setting. Or, they may need to take the test in a separate location because the accommodations they require (e.g., teacher prompting) have a tendency to distract other students. In some cases, accommodations such as specialized lighting or required equipment may only be available in a separate setting.

In addition, students who require timing and/or scheduling accommodations may need to take the test in a separate setting so they can perform to their potential. Taking frequent breaks, talking into a cassette recorder rather than writing on paper, or having the test read aloud also usually necessitate a separate location.

Special Considerations

Many setting accommodations require space and an adult to supervise and/or give the test. Students should not be tested in inappropriate settings — such as hallways or in small, unventilated rooms — even if no other spaces are available for individualized assistance. Care also should be taken to ensure that the student is comfortable with the adult who is supervising the test or providing the accommodation.

Potential distracters in the separate setting also should be identified. For example, it is highly probable that a student who requires the test to be read aloud and a student who responds by speaking into a cassette recorder would distract one another if placed in the same room. And a student who has difficulty concentrating and attending to the test may find it difficult to focus on the test if placed in a room with a student who uses a novel piece of technology.

Presentation Accommodations

Presentation accommodations are changes in how an assessment is given to a student. Presentation accommodations may be organized into three types:

- **Format alterations**. Examples include providing the test in Braille, highlighting key words or phrases in the directions, putting text elements such as print and bubbles in a larger size, using cues such as arrows and stop signs, and placing fewer items on a page.

- **Procedure changes.** Examples include answering questions about items during the test, using sign language to give directions, simplifying directions and language, providing extra examples, and prompting the student to stay focused on the task.
- **Assistive devices.** Examples include audiotapes, computers and word processors, magnification or amplification devices, and pencil grips. Taping test pages to the desk also is considered an assistive device.

Typical questions that an IEP team may ask when considering a student's need for presentation accommodations are:

- Can the student listen and follow oral directions?
- Can the student read the test and directions?
- What is the student's primary mode of communication? (e.g., sign language, communication assistive device)?

Descriptions of selected presentation accommodations found at the end of this section include:

- Different editions.
- Read test/directions.
- Reread directions.
- Cues.
- Prompts.
- Clarification.
- Templates.
- Markers.
- Secure paper to desk.
- Magnifying/amplification devices.

Needs Addressed

Student needs for presentation accommodations vary widely. Students with sensory needs frequently require format alterations. For example, a student with sensory needs may need large-print or Braille material. A student who has difficulty hearing may require the use of an amplification device when directions or test items are given orally. Procedural accommodations often are requested for students with learning disabilities and students with emotional difficulties. Examples might include reading the test to a student who has difficulty reading or clarifying the test directions.

Special Considerations

Many concerns about the appropriateness of assessment accommodations focus on presentation accommodations. There may be questions about the comparability of scores from an assessment in which a student is allowed to ask questions, have the test read aloud, or have certain test items explained in more depth. To ensure the appropriateness of an accommodation, primary consideration must be given to the purpose of the assessment. For example, it would not be appropriate to read the test to a student if the test is measuring decoding reading skills. However, if the skill to be measured was math problem solving, then reading the particular problem may be appropriate.

Response Accommodations

Response accommodations are changes in how a student provides answers. Three types of response accommodations can be considered:

- **Format alterations.** These accommodations change the response format. For example, the student may be allowed to make responses in the test booklet rather than answer on a separate sheet.
- **Procedure changes.** These accommodations allow students to give a response in a different mode. For example, a student may point to the answer, make an oral response to a scribe who records answers, or talk into a tape recorder.
- **Assistive devices.** These accommodations allow the student to use a device to record a response (e.g., word processor or computer to record answers, Braillers). Other types assist students who require support with non-assessed skills — such as spelling, vocabulary, and computation (e.g., calculators, spell checkers, arithmetic tables, dictionaries).

Typical questions that an IEP team may ask when considering a student's need for response accommodations are:

- Can the student respond in written format?
- What is the student's normal mode of communication?
- Can the student track from a test booklet to a test response form?

Descriptions of selected response accommodations found at the end of this section include:

- Student marks in booklet.
- Verbal response.
- Pencil grips.
- Special paper.
- Math tools.
- Reference materials.
- Technology.
- Point to answer.

Needs Addressed

The primary reason educators provide response accommodations is to meet needs related to physical and sensory disabilities that limit the student's ability to respond. Response accommodations also assist students who have memory, sequencing, directionality, alignment, organization, and other problems that may interfere with successful performance on tests. For example, a disability that limits the student's ability to give a response may be a reason for requesting such accommodations as a calculator when the target skill is math problem solving (not calculation) or a spell checker when the target skill is written composition (excluding mechanics).

Special Considerations

Numerous issues arise when educators begin to consider the appropriateness and use of response accommodations.

Questions may focus on the comparability of scores from an assessment in which a student is allowed to use a calculator, have a scribe record answers, or use a word processing program with spell checker to complete items. Educators need to understand the assessment's purpose to ensure the appropriateness of an accommodation. For example, if the test is designed to measure multiplication skills, using a calculator or matrix would be inappropriate. However, if the skill is math problem solving, then the use of those tools may be appropriate. If a student uses a communication device to respond, the vocabulary must be appropriate and accessible for use in the response.

Other Accommodations

Some accommodations do not fit under these general categories. Examples include motivation strategies (e.g., helping the student stay focused and on-task) and test taking skill preparation.

Making Assessment Accommodations: Suggestions From Practitioners

Even when teachers are comfortable making accommodations for students with disabilities in classroom assessments, transferring this practice to state and district-wide assessment situations may be a relatively new undertaking. Across the country, practitioners, in collaboration with families, are learning what it takes to support students with disabilities in large-scale assessments. Their knowledge and insights are beginning to inform the field about implementation issues — from selecting accommodations to helping a student use them in the assessment context. The following section includes recommendations from practitioners at different schools who have successfully supported students with disabilities in state or district-wide assessments.

Is there a preferred way to select an accommodation?

The goal of the IEP team is to protect the rights of the individual student while maintaining the validity of the assessment tools used to measure student performance. Selecting the right accommodation for the student requires careful thought and evaluation. While no single way is preferred, there are several principles that underlie all approaches. These are:

- The selection process should be a team approach which includes the child's parents.
- Whenever appropriate, the team should involve the student in the decision.
- The team should consider each student's needs on an individual basis.
- Once it is determined that a student needs a particular accommodation to participate in general state and district-wide assessment programs, it must be included in his or her IEP.

A final word of caution. A team should base its decisions on what a student

needs rather than attempting to give the student any accommodation available. A student is given an accommodation so that he or she may demonstrate his or her knowledge in a valid way — it is not given to make the test easier. Be careful not to overwhelm a student with too many accommodations, to provide inappropriate accommodations, or to make accommodations that the student does not want.

Are there special considerations when exploring using an accommodation with a student?

Accommodations used during assessment should reflect the accommodations used during instruction. Unfamiliar accommodations that are not used routinely by the student might lead to diminished performance on the assessment.

Do not expect a student to use an unfamiliar accommodation the day of the assessment. The student should be skilled and comfortable using the accommodation well before actually participating in the assessment.

Are there ways to organize the task to make it manageable?

Some practitioners suggest that the team begin the task by reviewing the state-approved or district-approved list of accommodations. For example, IEP team members may begin their discussion about a student by reviewing the list together. The focus question is, "What does the student need to help him or her participate appropriately on the assessment?" The team identifies a sublist of accommodations and proceeds to discuss each in more detail.

Can accommodations that do not appear on state-approved lists be used?

Many states and some districts have adopted approved lists of accommodations (note: these may be revised periodically). This means the accommodations on the list are standard and officials in the state or district consider them to be generally appropriate for the particular test. Experts, including the developers of the assessment, often have reviewed these lists.

States and districts have procedures that generally must be followed when a student requires an accommodation not on the approved list.

Are there special considerations when using an assistive device as an accommodation?

A student's need for assistive technology is determined by the IEP team on an individual basis. Once a team determines that a student needs a particular assistive technology device, then the student should receive training in how to use it. Technology should be integrated into classroom instruction and not used solely for large-scale testing purposes.

When planning for assistive technology accommodations, involve the student's related services staff (e.g., the speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist, and physical therapist), as well as the assistive technology specialist. These individuals often have insights into the student's needs, as well as up-to-date knowledge about assistive technology that can accommodate special needs. Encourage the student to use the

assistive technology device as appropriate in all educational settings.

Does the need for an accommodation change annually?

Practitioners caution that a student's need for an accommodation should be reexamined at least annually during an IEP meeting. If the IEP team has not met for some time before the general assessment administration, the team should reconsider accommodations closer to the time that the assessment is administered.

Recommended accommodations may change over time. For example, the student may improve his or her skills and therefore no longer require certain accommodations. Or, changes in technology may render a tool outdated.

What do students think about accommodations?

Student input is critical in selecting accommodations. If a student does not like an accommodation, he or she will not use it. Two key questions to ask a student about a proposed accommodation are: "Does this help you?" and "Will you use this accommodation?"

Educators should include students in decisions about accommodations whenever appropriate. Realize that some students may be embarrassed by some accommodations, or fear that classmates may tease them.

Some practitioners at the high school level have expressed concern that students do not advocate for the accommodations they need. Practitioners recommend educating older students about the purpose of accommodations. For example, some students who have difficulty reading (e.g., slow to process what is read, tendency to skip words as they read), still consider themselves to be readers. Thus, they do not see the need for a test to be read aloud to them; they do not understand that their performance will be impeded by their poor reading skills.

Are there special implementation concerns with some accommodations?

Different accommodations have different constraints. For example, practitioners in one school were surprised at the amount of additional time it took to read the test aloud. This had other, unforeseen consequences — the students became tired and some lost concentration as a result. The next time this accommodation was used, practitioners planned to schedule several breaks between subtests.

In another situation, some students found it difficult to use a familiar accommodation — headphones with a tape recorded test — in the testing situation. They became confused by the directions on the tape and let the tape run past the point where they were to stop it to answer the questions. They had no strategy to rewind it.

Is there a manageable way to keep track of multiple students who require accommodations?

The IEP team will record all accommodations in the student's IEP. However, for implementation purposes, some practitioners recommend keeping a master list of all students and all accommodations. This is important for several reasons:

- Because more than one student will be participating in the assessment, some coordination is necessary. Sufficient space (e.g., rooms), adults to provide the accommodations, and equipment will be necessary.
- If training is required for the accommodation, some economy of scale can be achieved by grouping students with similar accommodations.
- To achieve some economy of scale, group teachers and paraeducators of students with similar accommodations for professional development in implementing accommodations.

In one Maryland middle school, the special education chairperson has put all accommodations into a database. The database (see Figure 2B) contains each student's name and a listing of accommodations. Practitioners who are charged with coordinating related services use this form to note which students may be grouped for testing, what equipment will be needed, and special staffing needs. (Note: confidentiality issues must be addressed with the use of any forms.)

How do practitioners keep track of students on the day of the test?

Through advance planning, practitioners can ensure appropriate use of accommodations on the day of the test. For example:

- Are sufficient rooms available for students who require setting accommodations?
- Are enough adults available to deliver the accommodations and/or supervise the testing situation?
- Are enough assistive devices in good working order?
- When students are educated in regular classrooms, is the regular education teacher aware of the accommodation?

Figure 2C provides a tracking form developed by high school practitioners in Virginia. This form is used to track the students on the day of the test.

Conclusion

In the words of a middle school math teacher, "Accommodations are fair only when used properly." When used properly, assessment accommodations allow students with disabilities to show what they know without being impeded by their disabilities.

Figure 2B 1999/2000 Special Education Accommodations Database--Updated 11/21/99

Name	Extra Time	Small Group	Seating	Read to Student	Calculator	Mark in Box	Dictate	Word Processor	Repeat Directions	Adapt Curriculum	Resource Person	Other
Student A	X	X			X							
Student B					X							
Student C					X				X			
Student D	X											
Student E	X	X		X	X						X	
Student F	X	X			X		X	X				
Student G	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Individual Administration
Student H	X	X			X				X	X	X	
Student I	X	X	X		X	X			X			
Student J		X	X	X								
Student K	X				X	X	X	X				

Figure 2C

Testing & Accommodations
Period _____

Date	Teacher/Subject	Accommodations	Room	Tester

Not teaching this period:
Teacher: _____ Make sure _____ gets from room 105 to room 219, then monitor reading in room 137.

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Accommodations

A

Table of Contents

Timing Accommodations

1 - Frequent Breaks 32
2 - Extended Time 34

Scheduling Accommodations

1 - Over Several Days 35
2 - Order of Subtests 36
3 - Specific Time of Day 37

Setting Accommodations

1 - Preferential Seating 38
2 - Separate Location 39
3 - Specialized Setting 40

Presentation Accommodations

1 - Different Editions 41
2 - Read Test/Directions 42
3 - Reread Directions 43
4 - Cues 44
5 - Prompts 45
6 - Clarification 46
7 - Templates 47
8 - Markers 48
9 - Secure Paper to Desk 49
10 - Magnifying/Amplification Devices 49

Response Accommodations

1 - Student Marks Booklet 50
2 - Verbal Response 51
3 - Pencil Grips 52
4 - Special Paper 53
5 - Math Tools 54
6 - Reference Materials 55
7 - Technology 56
8 - Point to Answer 56

Timing

1 Frequent Breaks

Some students require frequent breaks during testing. This might mean providing a break on one subtest but not another. On long tests, it may mean providing breaks at predetermined intervals.

This accommodation is made by the teacher or test proctor. Usually, a set time for the break is scheduled (e.g., after completing the first subtest). If the student is old enough, he or she may be allowed to signal when a break is needed; however, the IEP would need to determine the appropriateness of this prior to the testing situation.

The decision for when to allow a break should be based on data from the IEP regarding how long a student is able to maintain sustained concentration and involvement in the assessment task. Consideration also should be given to whether the proposed break time interrupts a sequence of items or section of a test — which may, in fact, interfere with the student's performance.

Students should be briefed about the break policy before the test starts (e.g., when it will occur, who will alert the student). The teacher or designated adult should inform the student when it is time to take a break. Supervision during break time is important to ensure that the student actually benefits from the break, as well as to guarantee that no inappropriate supports are available (e.g., student uses a dictionary to define a word on the test).

Some teachers prefer to have students who need this accommodation take the test in another room, primarily for the following reasons:

- Frequent breaks may distract other students.
- Students may become distracted by their classmates who are at different places in the assessment. For instance, directions given to other students may interfere with the student's concentration.
- Some older students may be embarrassed about needing an accommodation and would prefer to keep it private.

Procedure

First consider the student's needs. Ask, "How often does the student need a break?" The student's classroom teacher usually is an excellent resource in answering this question. Next, review the assessment to see whether there are reasonable points in the assessment at which time the student might take a break with the least disruption to his or her concentration.

Use a timer (e.g., watch alarm, kitchen timer) to alert you to preestablished breaks. If a student has difficulty transitioning to a break, provide the student with a cue

Timing

1 Frequent Breaks (continued)

several minutes before the break (i.e., "we'll take a break in five minutes"). Depending on the student's needs, give the student a choice of taking the break or continuing.

If the student is permitted to inform you when he or she needs a break, determine the routine with the student. For example, the student simply may raise his or her hand and request it. Encourage the student to think about breaks strategically (e.g., try to finish a page or a section before requesting a break).

Cautions

Providing a student with breaks may interrupt his or her concentration. Make sure the student needs the break and that it occurs at an appropriate point in the test. In some states, breaks during a subtest are not approved.

Timing

2 Extended Time

Some students may require extended time to complete an assessment or a portion of an assessment (a subtest). The additional time may be required due to frequent breaks, or simply because the student needs more time to complete the test. Or, another accommodation may necessitate a time extension (e.g., generally a scribe takes longer to write). In all cases, this must be specified in the student's IEP and not determined at the time of the test.

Some students may require only a brief extension to finish their work. In these cases, students generally keep working until finished. When students need extensive time to finish, the test is usually scheduled over several sessions to avoid student fatigue.

Students who require this accommodation may need to take the test in another room for the following reasons:

- Providing the student with additional time may distract other students.
- Students may become distracted by their classmates who are at different places in the assessment. For instance, directions given to other students may interfere with the student's concentration.
- Some older students may be embarrassed about needing an accommodation and would prefer to keep it private.

Procedure

Determine the routine for extending time. For example:

- The student cues the teacher that he or she needs more time. The teacher permits the student to continue working.
- The teacher asks the student whether he or she needs more time. The teacher provides more time if the student requests it.
- Predetermine the time period. Inform the student of the timeframe for the subtest or test.

Cautions

When a student has too much time to finish an assessment, he or she may engage in nonproductive guessing or change answers when they should not be changed.

Scheduling

1 Over Several Days

A common accommodation is to administer the test in several sessions over several days. For example, a teacher may give one subtest on Monday and another on Tuesday, rather than giving it in its entirety on Monday. Or, the teacher may give the test on a specific day.

Generally, students who require this accommodation take the test in a separate setting so they will not distract other students — and so they will not be distracted.

Procedure

Review a calendar to determine the schedule for the test. The key is to meet the student's needs while not significantly interrupting the sequence of the test. For example, a reasonable place to stop an assessment for the day is at the end of a subtest. In fact, some experts caution against interrupting a subtest at all, so it is wise to check with your district before providing that as an option.

Share the schedule with the student and his or her family. In addition, make sure you have not scheduled testing times that conflict with important classroom instruction or with activities that are of high interest to the student (e.g., the student will miss a field trip).

Cautions

A student who must take a test over several days may experience a decline in motivation. Student absenteeism also may become a factor if several days of testing are scheduled.

Scheduling

2 Order of Subtests

Scheduling accommodations can include reversing the order in which subtests are given — for instance the student may begin with the math subtest rather than finish with it. Or, a longer subtest may be given first and a shorter subtest given later if this process does not invalidate the test.

Generally, students who require this accommodation should take the test in a separate setting so they do not distract other students — and so they will not be distracted.

Procedure

Review a calendar to determine the schedule for the test. The key is to meet the student's needs while not interfering significantly with the test sequencing. Set the schedule and inform the student of it. Arrange for a secure area.

Cautions

Changing the order of subtests may interfere with the flow of the test. For example, some tests are designed to start with less complicated questions and end with more complicated ones — so it is important to know what is being measured in any proposed switch. In addition, if the order is reversed, it is important to know district policy. For example, find out whether there are any potential security issues (e.g., the possibility that a student who takes a test early shares information about the test with classmates who have yet to take the test).

Scheduling

3 Specific Time of Day

Tests or subtests may be scheduled during a particular time of day. This accommodation often is requested for students who, due to their disability or treatment, may be more alert at certain times.

Generally, students who require this accommodation take the test in a separate setting so they do not distract other students — or so they will not be distracted.

Procedure

Review a calendar to determine the schedule for the test. Make sure that enough time is available for the student to complete the test.

Assuming that the student is taking the test at a time different from his or her peers, it is important to plan how he or she will receive appropriate instruction during non-testing time.

Share the schedule with the student and his or her family. In addition, make sure you have not scheduled testing times that conflict with important classroom instruction or with activities that are of high interest to the student (e.g., the student will miss a special assembly).

Cautions

Consider any potential security issues (e.g., the possibility that a student who takes a test early may share information about the test with classmates who have yet to take the test).

Setting

1 Preferential Seating

Preferential seating may include placement in the classroom (e.g., up front by the teacher, away from a distracting doorway or fan, facing the wall) or in a separate defined area such as a study carrel. Preferential seating may be implemented in the same room as other classmates, or it may be located in a separate setting.

Procedure

Review the room and identify all areas that may create distractions or provide best placements for individual students. Before asking a student to test in a location, make sure that both you and the student have tried to work in the space for an extended period of time. For example, while a student may work well in a study carrel during regular instructional activities, he or she may not do as well during an assessment. Or, while a student may work well in the front row during instruction, your presence at the desk may prove distracting for the student during a test situation.

Cautions

Students should be comfortable in special placements during assessments. Take care to ensure that the preferential seating is not perceived as punishment.

Setting

2 Separate Location

Separate locations (for example, the special education resource room, a vacant classroom, or a conference room) are generally used for small-group or individual testing. The rooms should be quiet (e.g., no phones ringing, no external noise such as a band practice room nearby), well lit, and appropriately ventilated. The size of the furniture should be appropriate for the age and size of the students. Adequate working space should be available.

Procedure

Identify an appropriate room — preferably one with which the student is familiar. If the student is not familiar with the room, provide him or her the opportunity to spend some time in it before the assessment. If necessary, make sure that the room is accessible to students with physical needs. Then, schedule the room.

On the day of the test, review the room accommodations and the arrangement of the furniture. Check to make sure there is adequate lighting and that all supplies (e.g., pencils, assistive devices) are in working order. Place a sign on the door that indicates testing is taking place.

Plan how the student will come to the room. If the student is expected to come to the room independently, determine a routine for transitioning prior to the testing day.

Cautions

Occasionally, the size of the room may be over estimated. For example, a room may appear large enough to accommodate five students, but once they are all present, the space is cramped. Or, the combination of students in a small group may prove troublesome (e.g., two students do not get along with each other, even though they require the same accommodation). Finally, when using another classroom, make sure objects that may be distracting to the students (e.g., a contingency chart, toys, interactive bulletin boards, and animals) have been removed.

Setting

3 Specialized Setting

Some students require special adaptive furniture, noise buffers, or special lighting. Usually, there are specific locations where students can receive such accommodations. Although it is preferable to make these accommodations available in the general test setting, it is not always possible.

Procedure

If a separate room is necessary, make sure the room is available and scheduled for the assessment session. Prior to the scheduled test time, make sure all of the accommodations are in proper working order. If the student is unfamiliar with the room, provide him or her with an opportunity prior to the test date to become comfortable there.

Plan how the student will come to the room. If the student is expected to come to the room independently, determine a routine for transitioning prior to the testing day.

Cautions

If the student is used to receiving these accommodations in the classroom, make sure the student understands why he or she must take the test in a separate location.

Presentation

1 Different Editions

There are a variety of format alterations. Examples include:

- **Braille version**. Braille format assessments are generally available from the state or test publisher.
- **Large print**. The assessment is presented in a larger type size. In addition, there may be more spacing between lines. In some cases, large print editions may be available from the state or the test publisher.
- **Large answer bubbles**. The bubbles on the response form are enlarged. This accommodation helps students who have difficulty staying within the bubble outline — especially in cases of machine-read response forms. In some cases, these may be available from the test publisher or companies that produce response forms.
- **Fewer items per page**. Items may be spread out for easier reading. Or, they may be spread over several pages to reduce a student's feeling of being overwhelmed. For example, rather than present 20 items on a page, there will be 10 items.

Procedure

First, determine if the test is available in the desired format. If it is not, follow district and/or state policies for modifying the test. For example, are Braille services (i.e., certified transcribers and proofreaders) available in the district? If a map on a page is too small, can you use a photocopier to make enlargements? When making your own accommodations, be sure to proofread the final version. If the student is taking the test with a different teacher, inform that teacher of the changes.

Cautions

If the test is not available in accommodated format, make sure that all elements of your accommodated test are present and are in proper sequence. In cases where you supplement an item (e.g., providing a map or diagram in larger size), make sure the student knows how to use the accommodated page in the context of the test. Otherwise, he or she may become confused.

When placing fewer items on a page, make sure that the items are grouped as much like the original as possible. For example, if there are five items in one part along with a figure, do not put four items on one page with the diagram and the fifth item on the next page. This would require the student to flip back and forth in the test booklet — which could prove troublesome for some students.

Students with behavioral or motivational difficulties may perceive a longer test as overwhelming. For example, 15 pages during a high-pressure situation may prove daunting for a youngster. When using a format accommodation with such a student, pair it with a timing accommodation. For example, give a student the first several pages of the assessment, then take a break when those pages are completed.

Presentation

2 Read Test/Directions

Reading the test verbally to the student is one of the most common accommodations. Generally, this is done in one of the following ways:

- An adult reads the test aloud to the student or group of students.
- The test is recorded on audio cassette. In this case, the student may listen in the regular testing room with the aid of headphones or listen in a separate setting with no headphones. Some states provide tests recorded on audiotape.
- The computer provides the test in verbal form.
- The test and/or directions are signed to the student.

Procedure

If the test is available from the state or a test publisher in audio format, be sure to check the tape prior to the testing time to ensure that the correct information is on the tape — this means that what is on the tape matches the written materials. Also check to ensure that the quality of the recording is adequate. In addition, be sure to have a backup tape.

Before reading the test directions and/or items — either for audio recording or real-time presentation — practice reading in a straightforward and clear manner. If necessary, check pronunciations, especially with regard to technical terms or names. Work out a procedure with the student so he or she can indicate when to have something reread (if allowable) or to move forward.

Determine how to orient the student to the test. For example, will the student be given the test page to look at before the reader begins? Will the reader provide an overview of the section prior to beginning reading (i.e., "There are six items. I am going to begin with the first item.").

If the student is using assistive devices (e.g., audiotape recorder, headphones, computer, computer peripherals, communication assistive device), check them the day of the test to ensure they are in proper working order. Make sure to have a supply of batteries on hand for tools that require them.

Cautions

When reading the test aloud to a student, take care to avoid emphasizing certain words that may give the student an unfair advantage (e.g., be sure not to use a different voice inflection when reading the correct response in a list of multiple choice answers or to emphasize a key word in the directions).

There is always the potential for some malfunction when an assistive device is used (e.g., tape breaks, machine stops working). Be sure to have a backup plan. It also is important that the student know how to alert the appropriate staff member should something appear to be malfunctioning.

Presentation

3 Reread Directions

In some tests, the directions are read aloud by an adult. Students who need to hear the directions more than once may require an accommodation. The adult might reread the directions, or students might receive a written copy of verbal instructions.

Procedure

Preparing the directions in written format may be as simple as making a photocopy of the originals. However, it is important to remove any extraneous information before copying. If the printed directions are too small, it may be necessary to enlarge them or retype them. As a security measure, it is important to collect the directions when the test booklet and response sheet are collected from the student.

A routine should be established in situations in which the directions will be reread to the student. For example, how will the student signal that he or she needs to hear the directions again? Can the directions be reread only at the start of the test, or can they be reread at any time during the section? The teacher, along with the IEP team, must decide whether this accommodation will interfere with the test taking of other students, thereby warranting a change in test setting for the student.

Cautions

If the directions only are to be reread verbatim to the student, the reader must guard against providing any explanations.

If a student will receive several sets of written directions, it is important to retrieve the previous set before providing the new set.

Depending on the extent of this accommodation (e.g., it is necessary to reread the directions many times), the student may need additional time to complete the test.

Presentation

4 Cues

Some students require help staying focused and on task. Cues are concrete reminders to do something or attend to something. Two of the most commonly used cues are:

- **Highlighting key words or phrases**. For example, in a set of directions that ask the students to complete addition problems, highlight the addition sign.
- **Symbol cues**. For example, write or draw cues such as arrows (e.g., indicating a new problem) and stop signs (signaling the end) on the response form or test booklet to remind the student to do something.

Procedure

Review the test booklet and form. Select only those terms and phrases that will truly help the student stay focused and on task. Highlight those terms and phrases.

It is important to use only those cues that the student needs. To prevent clutter or mistakes, make a copy of the test booklet page and experiment before marking the final version.

One variation of the technique is to have the student follow along as you read the directions and highlight the important words or phrases. This variation helps ensure that the student understands the purpose of the highlighting. On tests that ask students to match a word to a definition, students can underline or highlight the word as a way to stay focused.

Cautions

Before marking anything, it is a good idea to identify any special considerations. For example, if the answer form is computer readable, any stray markings may interfere with scoring. In such cases, the teacher may need to transfer the student's answers to another form — an accommodation that may require additional sign-offs or specific procedures.

In addition, keep in mind that this accommodation may be perceived as giving the student the answer. To avoid inadvertently selecting cues that coach the student, have another adult review them prior to sharing with the student.

Presentation

5 Prompts

Prompts are verbal statements that help a student stay focused on the test, move forward, or stop. Prompts or verbal cues also may redirect a student who has become distracted.

Procedure

The teacher determines what prompts are appropriate and when they will be used. The student is briefed on how the prompts will be used.

During the test, the teacher should monitor carefully to ensure that the student is answering in the correct way. This is especially important for students who may lose their place on an answer sheet.

Cautions

It is important to know when a prompt is appropriate. For example, some students may appear off task when they are thinking. If interchanges between the adult and student become too frequent, they may interfere with the concentration of other students.

Presentation

6 Clarification

When students require a clarification accommodation, the teacher is expected to provide some additional explanation — either of the directions or the actual test items. Common examples of clarification include:

- **Explain the directions.** Students are allowed to ask for clarification of the test directions or instructions. In some cases this may mean simplifying the language in the directions.
- **Answer questions without giving answers.** During the test, students are permitted to ask questions. Teachers are allowed to respond as long as they do not answer the question for the student or provide information the test is measuring (e.g., showing the student the formula for completing a math problem).
- **Provide extra examples.** Some tests will provide an example as part of the directions. This accommodation allows teachers to provide additional examples for students who require them.

Procedure

Review the directions and test items. Note particular places where the student may have difficulty and prepare clarifications.

Some teachers suggest that it is helpful to have a contingency plan in place should the student not understand after repeated attempts at clarification.

Cautions

There is some controversy about simplifying oral or written directions because such changes may reduce the comparability of the test. Furthermore, the changes may interfere with the student's ability to complete the test items successfully (e.g., critical information is left out of the new directions).

Presentation

7 Templates

Templates reduce visible print on a page. They also can mask parts of the page (e.g., cover Part 2 while the student is working on Part 1). Templates can cover text that has already been read, or they can cover text that will be needed in the future.

Procedure

Generally, templates are made from cardboard stock. For example, a student can use an index card to cover text.

Some templates are cut to shape. For example, a template may have a window that fits the space of a math problem. Or, it may have a window that fits over the responses on the answer sheet (i.e., shows the possible responses for a specific item).

Cautions

Some teachers recommend making the templates, handing them to the students, and retrieving them at the test's completion. Students should be taught a routine for using the template in advance of the test.

Presentation

8 Markers

Markers are used to help students maintain their place on a page of text (e.g., on a specific problem; on a specific answer). For example, a student might place a small cardboard square or chip next to the last item answered on the response form.

In some cases, the student marks the items that he or she has completed. For example, the student marks an X through the item number, either on the test booklet or on the answer sheet. Or, when matching words to their definitions, the student crosses out incorrect definitions as he or she reads them.

Procedure

If a tangible marker is being used, be sure to review the test and response form in advance to ensure that the marker is the appropriate size.

If the student is marking items with a pencil, it is important to review the procedure with the student, even though the student may be familiar with the technique. This ensures that the student does not mark something on the test that may create scoring problems.

Cautions

If the student will mark on the answer form, check for any additional guidelines that must be followed. For example, if the student has marked off each item answered on a computer-readable form, the teacher may need to transcribe the answers onto a clean response form. In this case, special guidelines may apply.

Presentation

9 Secure Paper to Desk

Some students need to have their test booklets and/or response forms secured to the desk to ensure that the sheets stay in place. Usually, the papers are secured with tape.

Procedure

Ask the student to get in a comfortable working position. Place the booklet and/or response form on the table and ask the student to move it into a preferred position. Tape it down, preferably with masking tape that can be removed easily if necessary.

Cautions

If the test section is long, the student may grow tired of the response form or booklet being in the same position. Check periodically and move the materials to a different angle if necessary.

Presentation

10 Magnifying/Amplification Devices

Students who have difficulty seeing may use magnifying devices to read directions and test items. There are a variety of magnification tools — in any case, the student should use the one with which he or she is most comfortable.

Some students may require amplification equipment as well as a hearing aid. For example, a teacher may use an amplification system to give large-group instructions.

Procedure

Check to see what devices students need and make sure they are in excellent working order on the day of the test. If the adult who is proctoring the test is unfamiliar with the use of a particular tool, allow ample time for training.

Cautions

Students who use magnification devices may tire more easily than other students. If this is the case for a particular student, it may be necessary to extend the time period or provide additional breaks.

Response

1 Student Marks Booklet

Some students have difficulty writing an answer on a separate sheet of paper. For example, they may lose their place or mark the wrong response item. Marking answers in the booklet can eliminate some of these difficulties.

An adult should transfer answers from the booklet to an answer sheet.

Procedure

Review the test. Make sure there is ample space for students to respond. If the test is multiple choice, determine how the student will respond (e.g., circle the letter).

Review the procedures with the student. Make sure he or she knows how to respond — and monitor for consistency throughout the test. For example, some students may circle a letter sometimes and put an X through it other times. Be sure students understand the procedure for changing answers (i.e., erase the original answer).

Cautions

It may be difficult to develop a set procedure for responding if there are different types of items on a given test. In some cases, the teacher may need to provide explicit directions and possibly an example of how to respond for each new section.

Response

2. Verbal Response

This accommodation allows the student to respond verbally to the written test items. The most common ways a student may respond are:

- The student speaks to an adult, who records the answer.
- The student speaks into a tape recorder and an adult marks the answer sheet at a later time.

Procedure

This accommodation usually requires a separate setting for the student. If a tape recorder is used, it is important to make sure the equipment is available and working properly.

Adult listeners should become familiar with the test so they can record students' responses easily.

If a tape recorder is used, the student should be taught a routine for recording answers.

Cautions

With verbal responses, it is difficult for the student to return to an item to recheck an answer. It also may be difficult to return to an item that was skipped. In cases where the student is speaking into a tape recorder, there also is a possibility that the student may confuse answers (i.e., forget to state that he or she skipped an item).

The transcriber may not keep up with the student's speed of talking when transcribing a long answer. Asking the student to talk slowly may cause the student to become distracted.

Transcribing audiotapes also can be difficult if the student speaks quietly, or if a noise interferes with an answer (e.g., when external sounds such as a lawn mower or siren are louder than the student's voice).

Response

3 Pencil Grips

Pencil grips are a simple accommodation that can help a student with fine motor problems, hand shaking, tremors, or writing disabilities complete a task that requires a written response. Pencil grips are plastic or rubber, and are available in various shapes and sizes. Typically, they are placed on standard pencils.

Allow students to practice with pencil grips before taking a test. Try out several types and make sure students benefit from using the grips and feel comfortable with them. Some students may benefit from using the pencil grips for all academic tasks that require writing.

Procedure

First, identify a student who may benefit from using a pencil grip. Select two or three styles of pencil grips. Then, have the student try out each pencil grip for a day or two and choose the one that is best.

It is helpful to work out a routine for what to do with the grip when it is not in use.

Cautions

Some students have difficulty keeping track of their pencils. Teachers may wish to have a special "pencil container" on the student's desk to ensure that pencils with grips always are available.

Response

4 Special Paper

Students with visual-motor problems may need special paper to help them align numbers and compute accurately or write sentences and paragraphs. These students may require graph paper, paper with large lines, or paper with more space between the lines.

Students with visual impairments or blindness may require Braille answer sheets.

Procedure

Make sure that the special paper is available the day of the test. Have extra sheets on hand.

The student may need specific instructions in how to use the paper for testing purposes. For example, should the student put his or her name on every sheet? Should the student number each sheet? Should the student write the test booklet page number and item number on the sheet?

If the student is using a Braille sheet, prepare it in advance and proofread carefully.

Cautions

Keeping track of the student's answers on separate paper can be a challenge. Some teachers recommend numbering the paper for the student and pre-writing the student's name (or identification number) on each sheet. In addition, it may be helpful to create a set of labels for each test section. When the student moves to a new page or section on the test, place a label on his or her sheet stating where the student is at that point.

Response

5 Math Tools

Some students with disabilities may require mathematical tools, such as a multiplication matrix. Students with sequencing and laterality problems may benefit from number lines or place value charts.

Various types of visual displays are available. These include arithmetic tables or matrices, an abacus or counting board, or simple number lines that can be taped to a student's desk.

Calculators are another type of mathematical tool. Calculators are suggested when the test is measuring a higher order math procedure (e.g., problem solving) rather than a basic skill (e.g., computation).

Procedure

Review the test and determine which subtests or sections require the use of a mathematical tool. Check the availability of the tool for the day of the test, and have extras and/or batteries on hand as needed. Also, make sure there is ample space for the student to use the tool.

Cautions

Even though a student may use one or more mathematical tools during regular instruction, he or she may require prompts regarding their use during a testing situation. For example, the test may require the demonstration of a variety of mathematical procedures that may necessitate several different tools. In this case, the student would need to know when to use which tool, how to retrieve the tool, and when not to use it.

Response

6 Reference Materials

Reference materials include spell checkers and dictionaries. Students may use these materials to define terms in the directions or in the test items. For example, on a writing assessment, the student may use a dictionary while proofreading his or her work.

Procedure

Review the test to determine which sections require the use of reference materials. Make the appropriate tool available to the student for the section of the test in which it is required.

If the student is allowed to complete a draft first, make sure he or she uses the reference tools before copying the final version into the test booklet.

Cautions

Care should be taken to ensure that students use reference materials appropriately. For example, if the test is assessing vocabulary, then it would not be appropriate to provide a dictionary. If the test is assessing spelling, a spell checker would not be appropriate.

Response

7 Technology

Some students must use technology to respond to test items. For example, they may write their answers on a computer (with or without a spell checker) or use a portable laptop device.

Procedure

Make sure that the equipment is available and working properly. Determine a procedure for identifying the student's work. Explain how the student should use the equipment to respond (for example, should the student identify the item in a special way?).

Cautions

As with any technological tool, there is always the possibility that a student may inadvertently erase his or her answers. To prevent this from happening, it is important to periodically remind the student to save his or her work.

Response

8 Point to Answer

In the case of tests that have multiple answers, a student may point to the answer and a scribe will record it.

Procedure

Arrange for a separate room. Have all materials ready. It is important that the student understands the procedure to use should he or she wish to change an answer.

Cautions

Some test booklets may present the responses so close together that it is difficult to determine which response the student actually chose. In such cases it is important to enlarge the page.

SECTION 3

A Guide for Administrators

Supporting the Implementation of Assessment Accommodations

As a result of the 1997 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which requires the participation of students with disabilities in general state and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations and modifications, where necessary, many students with disabilities are now included in large-scale assessments. [20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(17)(A) and 34 CFR §300.138] It is estimated by the National Center for Educational Outcomes that approximately 85 percent of all students with disabilities are able to participate, either with or without assessment accommodations. Fewer than 15 percent will require an alternate assessment, which states must have in place by July 1, 2000. When used appropriately, assessment accommodations provide students the means to show what they know without being impeded by their disability.

What does the mandate for the participation of students with disabilities in large-scale assessments with appropriate accommodations and modifications, where necessary, mean to administrators? Building administrators have an important role to play in making sure that appropriate assessment accommodations are made available to students with disabilities who need them. Principals should explain assessment accommodations to the staff, families, community members, and the students. Principals may need to dispel some myths about the ability

of students with disabilities to take and pass tests — such as the myth that accommodations give the students an unfair advantage. They need to monitor the process surrounding accommodations carefully, just as they do the entire assessment process.

In addition to these new tasks, principals also have data on special education programs and services that were never before available. This information provides a new opportunity for program improvement.

Principals who are meeting the challenge and ensuring that students who need assessment accommodations are receiving them are doing the following:

- Setting the tone for IEP team decisions about assessment accommodations.
- Demonstrating a working knowledge of accommodations.
- Supporting the implementation of assessment accommodations.

Setting the Tone

The principal, as the instructional leader within the school, should understand the rationale for assessment accommodations. In addition to the legal mandate, there is ample rationale for the participation of students with disabilities in state and district-wide assessments. Some of the most commonly cited reasons are:

- **To promote high expectations for the achievement of students with disabilities.** IDEA '97 emphasizes the appropriate involvement and progress of students with disabilities in the general curriculum, that is, the same curriculum as for nondisabled students [20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(1)(A) and 34 CFR §300.347(a)(1)-(3)]. Large-scale assessments can ensure accountability for student learning. Educators must ensure the appropriate participation of students with disabilities in large-scale assessments so they can measure progress. If there is accountability for nondisabled students, there also must be accountability for disabled students.
- **To obtain an accurate picture of student achievement statewide and nationwide.** This entails comparing school districts fairly with one another. This cannot be done if one district includes all students in its assessments and other districts exclude certain students.
- **To make sure that students with disabilities are benefiting from general education reform.** Most educational and fiscal decisions in school systems and state education agencies are based on large-scale assessment information. When students do not participate in assessments, they typically are not considered in these decisions, even though the decisions affect them.

The exclusion of students with disabilities from district and state assessments can have serious consequences. Expectations for these students may drop because of a tendency for school policymakers to concentrate only on the students who are assessed. In addition, the quality of instruction and curriculum standards for students with disabili-

ties may be lower than what is expected for nondisabled students.

Another issue concerns the responsibility of regular educators in educating students with disabilities. If schools are to be accountable for all of the students they teach, educators must ensure that all students appropriately participate in assessments. Educators are responsible for ensuring that all students learn, even students with disabilities who are taught outside the regular classroom and general education curriculum. Instructional leaders need to start with the assumption that all students will participate in regular assessments if they are learning the content, no matter where the instruction occurs.

Demonstrating a Working Knowledge of Accommodations

The trend to include students with disabilities in large-scale assessment programs became a requirement in the 1997 Reauthorization of the ***Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*** (IDEA). Administrators should understand the federal requirements related to accommodations (see Figure 3A). They also should understand their state and district policies.

An assessment accommodation is a change or alteration in how a student takes a test or how a test is administered. It allows students to show what they know without the impediment of the disability. Accommodations allow the student with disabilities to participate on an equal footing with students who do not have disabilities.

A wide array of accommodations are available to provide a more accurate picture of a student's knowledge and skills. Accommodations typically fall into several categories. (Note: the list below is only meant to provide examples; it is not exhaustive.) These are:

- **Setting**: The place where the test is administered. Some students may require individual testing in a separate place free from distractions, or in a smaller group setting with fewer students. Some students may require preferential seating within the room.
- **Scheduling**: The time of day or length of the testing session. Some students may require testing only in the morning; others may need to be tested during several short time periods.
- **Time**: The total amount of time a student requires to finish the test. Some students may require a longer period of time to complete the test due to slower mental processing speed or slower writing speed.
- **Presentation**: The appearance or delivery of the testing material. Some students may require large print, Braille, sign language, or audiotape presentation. Some students may need to have the directions repeated or have the test read aloud to them. Students with disabilities who also have limited English proficiency may require presentation accommodations that address their language needs.
- **Response**: The method by which students respond or indicate their answers. Some students may need to sign, dictate, or tape record their answers. A student may need to use a calculator or a word processor.

Figure 3A IDEA Requirements

Including students with disabilities in large-scale assessment programs became a requirement in the 1997 Reauthorization of the ***Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*** (IDEA). The law states:

- As a condition of eligibility, states must have policies and procedures to ensure that children with disabilities are included in general state and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations as necessary. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(17)(A) and 34 CFR §300.138(a)]
- Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) must include a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of state or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the student to participate in such assessments. [20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(1)(A)(v)(I) and 34 CFR §300.347(a)(5)(i)]
- If the IEP team determines that the child will not participate in a particular state or district-wide assessment of student achievement (or part of such assessment), the IEP must include a statement of why that assessment is not appropriate for the child, and how the child will be assessed. [34 CFR §300.347(a)(5)(A)(ii)]
- For students whose IEPs specify that they cannot participate in regular assessments, even with appropriate accommodations and modifications, the state must ensure development of guidelines for their participation in alternate assessments and develop and conduct alternate assessments by July 1, 2000. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(17)A)(I)-(II) and 34 CFR §300.138(b)(1)-(3)]
- States must have reporting policies and procedures in place that ensure proper reporting of information regarding the performance of students with disabilities on large-scale assessments. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(17)(B) and 34 CFR §300.139]
- States must establish performance indicators that must be used to assess progress toward achieving those goals and address the performance of children with disabilities on assessments, drop-out rates, and graduation rates. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(16) and 34 CFR §300.137]
- State reports to the public relating to assessments must include aggregated data and disaggregated data and must meet the timeline for disaggregation of data. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(17)(B) and 34 CFR §300.139(b)-(c)]

> Students may need to mark answers directly in the test booklet because they are unable to accurately mark a bubble sheet.

Decisions about assessment accommodations must be based on need, not benefit. In fact, this distinction is at the core of many controversies surrounding the use of accommodations. As instructional leaders, principals may be called upon to explain this distinction, so it is helpful to understand what underlies the different positions.

Some individuals argue that, in certain cases, accommodations may give students an unfair advantage. This rather popular misconception may be related to a misunderstanding of the need-versus-benefit basis for decision making. The following example involving a student who wears glasses can help to clarify this distinction.

> *The student needs glasses to read and write. He wears them everyday in class, as well as at home. On the day of testing, the teacher instructs the student wearing glasses to remove them, because no student will be given an advantage on the test. The student needs the glasses in order to see the test. The glasses do not give the student an unfair advantage with regard to the material being tested — they simply provide access to the test. Without the glasses the student's disability is being tested, not what he knows.*

We have become accustomed to glasses, hearing aids, wheel chairs, and other devices that enable students to participate in instruction. However, the fact remains that they are accommodations. Where questions of fairness often arise is when accommodations that are not common — such as using a calculator when the test does not measure calculation, clarifying directions, or having extended time to complete a test — are suggested for a student who needs them.

All decisions about accommodations must be based on disability-related needs, not benefit. Many students without disabilities might benefit from having extended time on a state assessment. The difference is that a student with a disability may need extended time because of his or her disability (i.e., the disability manifests in a very slow processing speed that requires more time for the student to think through an answer). If this student is not allowed extra time, the assessment will measure the affect of the disability on the student's performance rather than what the student knows about the content.

There are other considerations involved in making decisions about assessment accommodations. They include:

- **Integrate assessment accommodations into classroom instruction.** Do not introduce an unfamiliar accommodation during the assessment. Preferably, the student should use the accommodation as part of regular instruction. At the very least, the student should have ample time to learn the accommodation and practice using it prior to the assessment.
- **Know the purpose of the assessment.** The purpose of the test will in some cases determine whether an accommodation is acceptable. For example, if a test is designed to measure decoding ability, it would not be appropriate to read the test to the

student. The accommodation would invalidate the results. However, if the purpose of the test is to measure math problem solving, then it would be appropriate to read the test to the student. If the purpose of the test is to measure computation, the use of a calculator would be inappropriate. Select only those accommodations that do not interfere with the skill the test is intended to measure.

- **Plan early for accommodations.** Consideration of assessment accommodations should occur long before they will be required so the student has sufficient opportunity to learn and feel comfortable using them.
- **Be familiar with district-approved and state-approved lists of accommodations.** Although the student's IEP team decides whether accommodations should be provided and what accommodations are appropriate for the student, the team's inquiry always should begin with a determination of student disability-related need. Many states have prepared a list of officially-approved accommodations. These accommodations vary widely from state to state and district to district. All administrators should be familiar with these approved accommodations. They also should provide a list or checksheet to the staff members (i.e., the IEP team) who make decisions. Generally, the documentation procedure requirements vary depending on whether or not the accommodation is found on the state-approved list.
- **Ask if the test publisher has prepared a list of accommodations.** A few test publishers (e.g., Iowa Test of Basic Skills) make available lists of accommodations that the developers deem appropriate for the test. Such lists can be useful to IEP teams as they plan.

Allowing students to use accommodations on state or district-wide assessments equalizes the challenge and increases the validity of testing. When accommodations are selected and implemented appropriately, students can show what they know. Appropriate accommodations do not provide an unfair advantage. Figure 3B summarizes guiding principles for making assessment accommodations that principals may share with staff and family members.

Understanding Reporting Practices

How scores for students with disabilities who receive accommodations will be reported is an important issue. Reporting these scores is important because it is the first step toward representation in the accountability system.

In general, reporting practices vary greatly from district to district and from state to state, making comparisons difficult. Administrators should be familiar with how their district and/or state handles such reports.

Administrators also should be aware of common concerns related to reporting scores. If accommodations are appropriate — that is, the IEP team has followed sound guidelines in arriving at the decision to request an accommodation for a student — then the student's score should not be at issue. What does tend to be at issue are core concerns about including students with disabili-

Figure 3B Guiding Principles

Do not assume that every student with disabilities needs assessment accommodations. Accommodations used in assessments should parallel accommodations used in instruction.

Obtain approval by IEP team. The IEP team must determine the accommodations.

Base accommodations on student need. Accommodations should respond to the needs of the individual student and not be disability specific. Do not base accommodations on educational program placement (e.g., percentage of time the student spends in the general education classroom). While students with the same disability may tend to need the same kinds of accommodations, this is not a sound basis for making decisions.

Be respectful of the student's cultural and ethnic background. When suggesting an accommodation, make sure the student and his or her family are comfortable with it. When working with a student who has limited English proficiency, consider explaining the assessment in his or her primary language.

Integrate assessment accommodations into classroom instruction. Never introduce an unfamiliar accommodation to a student during an assessment. Preferably, the student should use the accommodation as part of regular instruction. At the very least, the student should have ample time to learn and practice using the accommodation prior to the assessment.

Know whether your state and/or district has an approved list of accommodations. Although the ultimate authority for making decisions about accommodations rests with the student's IEP team, many states and districts have prepared a list of officially-approved accommodations. These lists vary widely from district to district or state to state. Generally, there are different documentation procedures depending on whether the accommodation is or is not found on the state-approved/district-approved list. Practitioners and families should consider the state laws and district policies.

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Figure 3B Guiding Principles (continued)

Plan early for accommodations. Begin consideration of assessment accommodations long before the student will use them, so that he or she has sufficient opportunity to learn and feel comfortable.

Include students in decision making. Whenever possible, include the student in determining an appropriate accommodation. Find out whether the student perceives a need for the accommodation and whether he or she is willing to use it. If a student does not want to use an accommodation (e.g., it is embarrassing or it is too cumbersome to use), the student probably will not use it.

Understand the purpose of the assessment. Select only those accommodations that do not interfere with the intent of the test. For example, if the test measures calculations, a calculator would provide the student with an unfair advantage. However, if the math test measures problem-solving ability, a calculator may be appropriate. Similarly, reading a test to a student would not present an unfair advantage unless the test measures reading ability.

Request only those accommodations that are truly needed. Too many accommodations may overload the student and prove detrimental. When suggesting more than one accommodation, make sure the accommodations are compatible (e.g., do not interfere with each other or cause an undue burden on the student).

Determine if the selected accommodation requires another accommodation. Some accommodations — such as having a test read aloud — may prove distracting for other students, and therefore also may require a setting accommodation.

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Figure 3B Guiding Principles (continued)

Provide practice opportunities for the student. Many standardized test formats are very different from teacher-made tests. This may pose problems for students. Most tests have sample tests or practice versions. While it is inappropriate to review the actual test with the student, practice tests are designed for this purpose. Teach students test-taking tips, such as knowing how much time is allotted and pacing oneself so as not to spend too much time on one item. Orient students to the test format or types of questions. For example, on multiple-choice tests, encourage students to read each choice carefully, eliminate the wrong choices, and then select their answer.

Remember that accommodations in test taking won't necessarily eliminate frustration for the student. Accommodations allow a student to demonstrate what he or she knows and can do. They are provided to meet student needs, not to give anyone an unfair advantage. Thus, accommodations will not in themselves guarantee a good score for a student or reduce test anxiety or other emotional reactions to the testing situation. Accommodations are intended to level the playing field.

ties in high-stakes assessments (e.g., whether a student receives a diploma, whether an accommodation invalidates test scores).

Additionally, administrators may be asked or choose to support the reporting process by:

- Keeping records of how many students with disabilities participated and how many did not.
- Keeping track of the accommodations that were used for students.
- Informing parents about the reporting policy.
- Asking for data to be sorted in such a way that scores for students with disabilities can be reported separately, as part of the general population, or in other ways.

Finally, administrators will want to ensure compliance with the IDEA reporting requirements. Specifically, IDEA requires the state education agency (SEA) to make available the following information to the public and report to the public with the same frequency and in the same detail as it reports on the assessment of children without disabilities [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(17)(B) and 34 CFR §300.139]:

- The number of children with disabilities participating in regular state and district-wide assessment programs and in alternate assessments.
- The performance results of children with disabilities if doing so would be statistically sound and would not result in the disclosure of performance results identifiable to indi-

vidual children on both regular assessments and on alternate assessments (for the latter, the compliance date is July 1, 2000). [34 CFR §300.139(a)(2)]

According to IDEA, SEA reports to the public must include aggregated data that show the performance of students with disabilities together with all other children and disaggregated data that show the performance of students with disabilities. [34 CFR §300.139(b)] The local education agency (LEA) is required to provide the SEA with information necessary to enable the SEA to carry out its duties. [34 CFR §300.240]

Supporting the Implementation of Assessment Accommodations

Principals pave the way for wise decision making in their schools. Generally, principals undertake the following tasks to prepare for implementation:

- Developing a plan.
- Designing staff training.
- Ensuring parent involvement.
- Overseeing logistics.

Prior to beginning the planning process with staff, it is a good idea to review the rationale for accommodations. Staff need to have a working understanding of accommodations and how they are used to support a student's needs.

Developing a Plan

Principals are wise to ask a team of staff members to help develop a plan of action for preparing staff for assessment accommodations. This may be a new team or an existing team within the building (e.g., a child study team, an IEP team that has already worked through this issue and is willing to offer support to others). The team might include an administrator, special educators, general educators, related service personnel, the school psychologist, a paraeducator, and a parent. It is very important that general educators are part of this team so that the teachers do not perceive assessment accommodations as something only special educators do. It is important that team members have knowledge and a positive attitude. It also is helpful if team members are experienced in adapting instruction for students with special needs and already are making accommodations.

For planning purposes, the team should help with the following tasks:

- Design staff training.
- Work with parents.
- Develop procedures that support school staff in handling the logistics of making assessment accommodations.

Some preliminary activities that may help team members focus on planning for the tasks are:

- Provide the team with information on assessment accommodations. The Practitioner's Guide (Section 2) in *Making Assessment Accommodations: A Toolkit for Educators* includes a description of commonly used accommodations. If available, review the list of state- and/or district-approved accommodations.

Many states post current assessment information on their education agency's web site. Links to these web sites are available through the Council of Chief State School Officer's (CCSSO) web site **http://www.ccsso.org/seamenu.html**.

- Discuss issues related to making assessment accommodations, such as equity in assessment, need versus benefit, and data analysis for program improvement for special needs populations.
- Review current decision-making practices within the building and/or district.
- Assess staffing needs during the assessment period.
- Assess staff needs for training.
- Develop a clear system for future decision making. (It can be helpful to map out a draft of the decision making and documentation process before presenting it to staff.)
- Develop a plan to prepare students with disabilities to use accommodations. As part of this plan, include a strategy for informing nondisabled students about the purpose for accommodations.
- Discuss documentation and decide how best to document accommodations and communicate this information to others.
- Develop a timeline for implementation containing all steps necessary for training. Define individual team member responsibilities.

Once the planning team has accomplished its tasks, everyone who is involved with making assessment accommodations — including paraeducators who may help teachers prepare certain accommodations and related service personnel who may implement assessment accommodations — will require training.

Designing Staff Training

If feasible, have the planning team organize the training experiences for staff. Two levels of training should be considered:

- Awareness training for the entire staff.
- Skill training for staff members who will be actually administering the accommodations.

The training for the entire staff should focus on what assessment accommodations are and why they are necessary. Depending on how much experience the staff has had with classroom accommodations, the agenda may include specific examples of accommodations and a discussion of appropriate accommodations. A list of suggested topics is found in Figure 3C.

Gaining an understanding and an acceptance of accommodations usually will be easier in schools where students with disabilities spend most of their time in general education because teachers are typically more accustomed to designing and implementing classroom accommodations. In schools where students with disabilities spend most of their day in self-contained special edu-

Figure 3C Topics for Staff Development

Suggested Topics for Staff Development Workshops

- Defining assessment accommodations.
- Discussing the purpose of these accommodations.
- Dispelling myths about accommodations.
- Sharing examples of accommodations that staff are currently using.
- Understanding the difference between a need and an unfair benefit.
- Discussing in grade level teams or departments what accommodations suggest for classroom instruction.
- Presenting and asking for input on documentation and communication procedures.
- Defining every staff member's responsibility.
- Presenting periodic updates in accommodations information and procedural changes.
- Sharing positive practices within the school that are related to accommodations.
- Discussing assessment accommodations with families and advocates.

Suggested Topics for Skill Training Workshops

- How to deliver all state- or district-approved accommodations.
- How to complete all required documentation procedures.
- Explicit methodology related to certain accommodations. For example: when a test is read, it must verbatim; if a student dictates a response there can be no prompting or asking questions for clarification; when transcription is done, it must be word for word; if directions are repeated, they must be verbatim with no other explanation provided; tape recording of the test must be verbatim; when students are tested in a small group, a special educator must be present at all times.
- Time for staff to ask questions while the experts are present. For example: Can students use dictionaries? If a child uses a word processor, can he or she use spell check? If a student has an accommodation to mark directly in a test booklet, how must that be packaged for return and scoring?
- Names and phone numbers of persons to contact if questions should arise.
- How and where specialized materials can be obtained. For example, large print or Braille materials, and interpreters for signing.

cation settings, teachers may not have the same comfort and experience base with accommodations, and thus may require much more information and practice with cases to establish a thorough understanding.

Once staff members are familiar with accommodations, define the procedural requirements and the individual responsibilities of each staff member. The principal will need to monitor the training and be aware of issues that indicate the need for continuing training. Principals may wish to cover emerging issues related to changes in state and district assessments and documentation requirements in future workshops. Issues that arise from implementing the school's procedures also may create a need for additional training.

One elementary school had an experience that demonstrated the need to renew staff training efforts. The school's story follows.

> *Ridgemont Elementary School (a pseudonym) is a school where staff members have used assessment accommodations with students with disabilities for several years. The teachers on one of the grade level teams developed an accommodations checklist with the special education teacher as a method of documenting student accommodations (see Figure 3D).*
>
> *The team also uses the checklist as a guide in discussing accommodation needs at annual IEP review meetings. As team members discuss the accommodations and deem them appropriate and needed, they check them off on the checklist. A copy of the checklist is placed in the student's confidential folder with the IEP. The special education teacher/case manager, the classroom teacher, and the parent receive a copy of the completed checklist.*
>
> *Classroom teachers use the checklist to keep track of the accommodations for each student with disabilities in their classroom. The checklist assists the teachers in making accommodations in daily lessons. For example, the teacher integrates the accommodations into all classroom tests and assessments. The special educator assists classroom teachers in obtaining any equipment that the students need (e.g., calculators, laptops, pencil grips, carrels). When appropriate, the special educator takes those students who require a separate test setting to the resource room for their classroom tests. This helps students develop a routine and comfort level with the setting accommodation they will be expected to use during large-scale assessments.*
>
> *A problem surfaced when staff members first started using the checklist. Team members viewed the checklist much like a menu — they found themselves selecting accommodations they thought would be good for the students. As the list of accommodations grew longer for each student, they began to realize they were choosing accommodations that would be helpful (beneficial), not accom-*

Figure 3D Accommodations Checklist

Student Name:_____ Grade:_____ Date:_____

Test accommodations should be recommended for a student with a disability if the disability will interfere with the student's ability to complete the required assessments. Identified accommodations must align with the student's specific areas of educational impact as documented in the student's IEP.

Setting Accommodations

- ❒ Preferential seating
- ❒ Taking the test in a separate location
- ❒ In a small group with staff support
- ❒ Individual administration
- ❒ Other as specified in student IEP_____

Scheduling Accommodations

- ❒ Scheduled over several class periods or days
- ❒ Reverse the order of subtests
- ❒ Scheduled during a specific time of day
- ❒ Other as specified in student IEP_____

Time Accommodations

- ❒ Frequent breaks
- ❒ Extended time
- ❒ Other as specified in student IEP_____

Presentation Accommodations

- ❒ Large print or Braille test materials
- ❒ Sign language interpreter, amplification, or visual display
- ❒ Clarifying directions
- ❒ Verbatim audiotaped directions
- ❒ Verbatim audiotaped presentation of entire test
- ❒ Verbatim reading of entire test or selected portions
- ❒ Other as specified in student IEP_____

Response Accommodations

- ❒ Mark answers directly in the test booklet or on test paper
- ❒ Student indicates answers by pointing or other method
- ❒ Student dictates response to staff member or tape records answers
- ❒ Other as specified in student IEP_____

modations that actually were needed. For example, the checklist for a student who had no disability in math and, in fact, had average test scores in math on classroom tests, had "calculator" marked as an appropriate accommodation. In addition, the number of accommodations was becoming unmanageable.

The special educator and principal conducted a training session for the staff on need versus benefit. The staff agreed that every accommodation had to be directly related to a need arising from the student's disability in order to be considered as necessary.

In the next round of annual reviews, the staff made another discovery. They spent an exceptionally long time in meetings with parents, because parents had come to expect all of the accommodations. Thus, parent education became a component of every meeting. Had they realized this would be necessary, they could have planned a parent workshop prior to the annual review season. That way they could have gotten to some, maybe even a majority of the parents, before the meetings were underway.

Staff members still use the checklist and find that it serves them well as both a communication and a record keeping tool. But they also now recognize its limitations. They are careful to provide training in the appropriate selection of accommodations for all new teachers. And they are careful to include parents in these trainings as well.

Administrators need to ensure that staff members who are responsible for implementing accommodations are trained in specific administration practices. One strategy is to include specialists from the district (e.g., director of special education, chief accountability officer, and school psychologist) in staff training sessions. Or, encourage the district to invite state agency staff with assessment responsibilities who also are knowledgeable about state policies for students with disabilities to speak to the school community.

Administrators should always document training activities. It is a good practice to include notes about what took place and exactly what was covered, should questions or concerns arise in the future.

Ensuring Parent Involvement

As members of the IEP team, parents play an important role in determining the use of assessment accommodations for their child. As they are with all other major decisions about the child's special education program, parents are full and equal partners in the decision to use — or not to use — assessment accommodations.

Parents naturally want their child to have every opportunity, but they need to understand the reason for the accommodations and the effect those accommodation may have on assessment results. (This is an important concept for all parents to understand, not just parents of students with disabilities.)

Principals will want to communicate

with families about assessment accommodations. Consider sending home a letter or newsletter detailing the information. At the end of this guide is a blackline master for a parent information pamphlet. The pamphlet may be photocopied and used as-is, or information may be extracted and adapted to better reflect a district's unique situation. A Spanish version of the pamphlet also is included.

Some principals may want to share information about assessment accommodations at Parent Teacher Association meetings, at a back-to-school night, or at another event that draws large numbers of parents. Coffees or informal meetings are good ways to follow up a larger meeting for parents who have additional questions. While the planning team may help plan the meetings and gather materials, these types of presentations are best handled by the administrator personally because it reassures parents that this is an important issue that is receiving top support.

The involvement of parents of students with disabilities may be enhanced by general briefings or workshops held **prior** to their coming to the IEP meeting where the decisions will be made. To engage parents in learning more about the topic, the agenda for discussion might include:

- General information about why students with disabilities should participate in large-scale assessments, either with or without accommodations and modifications.
- The purpose of accommodations. (It also may be helpful to share any state-approved lists of accommodations.)
- How accommodation decisions are made within the school district.
- The difference between a need and an unfair benefit.
- How assessment results will be reported and used.

Parents also will need basic information on what assessments are required in the district, the purpose of the assessments, and which students must take them. They should have a schedule for when the tests are given so they can help the school prepare their child for the experience.

In addition, some parents of students with disabilities may require more in-depth information. Parents will have very specific questions about their own children. They may want to know how decisions about accommodations are made and the specific accommodations to which their child is entitled.

Principals have found that parents have two major areas of concern. First, they are concerned about how their child will do on the test. They ask questions such as, "Will it create so much anxiety that it will damage the child's self-concept?" They also want to know how the test results will be used. For example, they ask questions such as, "Will scores go into the child's record?" and "If the child does not do well, will the child's opportunities be limited in the future?"

The second area of concern relates to types of accommodations and how they are applied. The concept of need versus benefit is a particularly difficult area for parents of students with disabilities (understandably, they want their child to have every benefit and advantage), so it is important to help them under-

stand this important distinction. The use of concrete examples and case studies may prove beneficial in the discussion.

It is important to send a letter to parents in advance of the testing date communicating the specific accommodations their children will receive. This letter should be sent following the meeting where the decisions are made. Some schools send another letter reminding parents of the testing and listing the accommodations again. This assists parents in preparing their child for the test situation.

Overseeing Logistics

Even though the planning team may be able to assist with certain tasks, administrators should monitor the entire implementation process. Many aspects of implementation require the administrator's input and guidance.

Tasks may be organized by time of year: beginning of the year, as the assessment date draws near, during the assessment, and after the assessment is completed.

An example of a logistics checklist is presented in Figure 3E. Make copies for team members as they plan and begin assigning roles.

Tasks At the Beginning of the Year

Following is a sampling of tasks that educators should complete at the beginning of each year:

- **Review the knowledge base of IEP team members to ensure they have sufficient understanding of assessment accommodations.** For example, be sure a general education teacher who is new to a team has the necessary information. Or, brief the school psychologist who is new to the building about school practices.
- **Review any new requirements from the state or the district that will affect either the decision to request an accommodation or the way in which the process is documented.** Make the appropriate revisions in any current practices and communicate those changes to all involved parties.
- **Plan training.** Determine ways to present information about assessment accommodations to new parents. Provide training to new staff members who are not familiar with assessment accommodations.
- **Arrange for special educators to meet with staff.** Provide teachers with accommodation information for their students.
- **Reinforce with teachers the importance of making classroom accommodations for students with disabilities.** Routinely, remind teachers of the importance of integrating accommodations into instruction.

It is helpful to have on hand any district or state forms that list accommodations. A sample checklist of accommodations is presented in Figure 3D. The checklist can be copied for selected staff.

Tasks Prior to the Test date

Many tasks arise when the actual testing date is approaching. These tasks are best assigned to specific staff members. With the planning team, administrators may want to clarify roles and responsibilities very carefully. Examples of tasks

Figure 3E Logistics Checklist

At the Beginning of the Year

- ❒ Review the knowledge base of IEP team members to ensure they have sufficient understanding of assessment accommodations. For example, if a general education teacher is assigned to a team, he or she may need to be brought up to speed regarding accommodations. Or if a school psychologist is new to the building, he or she may appreciate a briefing on school practices.
- ❒ Review any new requirements from the state or the district that will affect the decision to request an accommodation or to document the process. Make the appropriate revisions in any current practices and communicate those changes to all involved parties.
- ❒ Plan ways to present assessment accommodation information to new parents.
- ❒ Provide training to new staff members who are not familiar with assessment accommodations.
- ❒ Arrange for special educators to meet with staff and provide teachers with accommodation information for all of their students.
- ❒ Reinforce with teachers the importance of making classroom accommodations for students with disabilities.

Prior to the Test Date

- ❒ How are accommodations documented in the student's file? Are the appropriate forms present in all files?
- ❒ Who will send letters to parents detailing their child's accommodations?
- ❒ How will the teachers administering the tests know which students should receive what accommodations in the testing situation?
- ❒ Who is available to fill in if a teacher is absent? (Note: In some states substitutes and paraeducators cannot administer tests.)
- ❒ Who will be responsible for making accommodations during the testing session?
- ❒ Who will be responsible for obtaining large print, Braille, or other specialized materials? Have paraeducators been informed of any related responsibilities?

- continued -

Figure 3E Logistics Checklist (continued)

- ❒ Do any students need to listen to tape recorded materials or dictate into a tape recorder? If so, where will they go, and who will accompany them?
- ❒ Who will be available to take students' dictation?
- ❒ How many students require calculators? Are there enough available? Are back-up strategies in place?
- ❒ How many students require the use of a word processor? Are enough available? Is a computer lab available for their use?
- ❒ How many students need a small-group setting? How many rooms will be needed? Where will they meet? Who will be in charge? Are enough staff members available to cover all the sites?
- ❒ Which students require individual testing? When will they be tested, by whom?
- ❒ What is the testing schedule? Does testing fall at an appropriate time for those students with test scheduling needs (e.g., morning only)? Can alternative sessions be planned? Who will supervise the students?
- ❒ Is a room available for students who require extended time? How does this affect the lunch schedule?

During the Testing Session

- ❒ What will we do if a staff member or student is absent?
- ❒ Do we have alternative rooms in case there is a problem?
- ❒ What if the fire alarm rings during the testing session? How will it affect the schedule? What if it upsets the students with emotional problems? Can we restart the testing after letting them calm down?
- ❒ What if the tape recorders don't work?
- ❒ What if we have a power failure and students can't use the equipment? What if we have to reschedule the session?
- ❒ What if, due to absences of staff, we don't have enough people to provide accommodations?
- ❒ Who will walk the halls, answer staff questions, or run errands if teachers have problems?

- continued -

Figure 3E Logistics Checklist (continued)

After the Assessment

- ❒ Who will sort out tests and pack them for shipping?
- ❒ Who was absent, and when will the make-up session take place? Who will administer the tests?
- ❒ Were any students who require accommodations absent? Who will accommodate them?
- ❒ Who will complete the necessary paperwork accounting for all of the testing materials?
- ❒ Who will return all of the equipment to the proper locations?

at this stage follow:

- How are accommodations documented in the student's file? Are the forms present in all files. Do staff members understand the importance of documentation?
- Who will send out the letters to parents detailing their child's accommodations?
- How will the teachers administering the tests know which students should receive what accommodations in the testing situation?
- Who is available to fill in if a teacher is absent? (Note: In some states substitutes and paraeducators cannot administer tests.)
- Who will be responsible for making the accommodations during the testing session?
- Who will be responsible for obtaining large print, Braille, or other specialized materials? Have paraeducators been informed of any related responsibilities?
- Do any students need to listen to tape recorded materials or dictate into a tape recorder? If so, where will they go, and who will accompany them?
- Who will be available to take student dictation?
- Will sufficient numbers of trained staff members be available during the assessment period?
- How many students require calculators? Are enough calculators available? Are backup strategies in place?
- How many students require the use of a word processor? Are enough word processors available in the rooms? Is a computer lab available for use?
- How many students need a small group setting? How many rooms

will be needed? Who will be in charge there? Are enough staff available to cover all the sites?

- Do any students require individual testing? When will they be tested and by whom?
- What is the testing schedule? Does testing fall at an appropriate time for those students with test scheduling needs (e.g., morning only)? Can alternative sessions be planned? Who will supervise the students?
- Is a room available for students who require extended time? How does this affect the lunch schedule?

Preparation for the assessments can be challenging. Many details must be addressed. Staff can handle much of the work, but take great care to cover all of the necessary points. Define each person's role clearly.

Tracking accommodations is another challenging task. Communicating about accommodations at this stage can prove difficult, even under the best of circumstances. The following example illustrates how staff members at a middle school discovered solutions to typical problems related to tracking accommodations.

Kendellwood Middle School (pseudonym) staff began using a database to keep track of the assessment accommodations they would use during statewide testing. Kendellwood staff had been using a standard checklist developed by the district to record accommodations for individual students. The checklist was designed as an attachment to each student's IEP. Teachers also could copy and use the checklists.

However, in a large middle school of nearly 1,000 students where there were approximately 170 students with disabilities, the checklists were too cumbersome to use effectively as a management and communication tool. The staff tried putting the checklists for each student on an interdisciplinary team into a notebook kept in the team planning room. However, the special education staff soon found that teachers did not use the notebook as intended (primarily due to the fact it was located in an inconvenient location) and were often unaware of student accommodations.

As a result, the administrators decided that each special educator should meet with each team at the beginning of each year to review the information on the checklist, as well as any other pertinent information on the students with special needs. This was helpful, and most teachers took notes and maintained their own records of student accommodations.

Yet, problems continued to arise, and a problem solving meeting was scheduled. The special education staff members were interested in finding a way to keep the information confidential, yet in an easily accessible form for the teachers. The department decided to establish a database containing all

Figure 3F 1999/2000 Special Education Accommodations Database--Updated 11/21/99

Name	Extra Time	Small Group	Seating	Read to Student	Calculator	Mark in Box	Dictate	Word Processor	Repeat Directions	Adapt Curriculum	Resource Person	Other
Student A	X	X			X							
Student B					X							
Student C					X				X			
Student D	X											
Student E	X	X		X	X						X	
Student F	X	X			X		X	X				
Student G	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Individual Administration
Student H	X	X			X				X	X	X	
Student I	X	X	X		X	X			X			
Student J		X	X	X								
Student K	X				X	X	X	X				

of the students' names and accommodations (see Figure 3F). Data were entered for the students on each teacher's caseload. An X was placed in the field designated for each appropriate accommodation. The fields were taken directly from the checklist. Fields were added for the team and the teacher.

The database proved to be useful in ways that the special educators had never anticipated. For example, they could sort students by team and by teacher, generating specialized lists. The format contained all of the students and their accommodations in a concise format that was easily referenced, and the teachers used it frequently. Users could generate individual reports detailing a student's personal accommodations. The database could be used as a mail merge to generate letters containing a listing of a student's accommodation(s) for his or her parents. Once the database was established, it was fairly easy to keep up-to-date as accommodations changed or students were added or deleted.

When test administration time came around, it was easy to determine how many students required each accommodation (e.g., the number calculators necessary, the number at each grade level requiring a separate small-group testing room, the number requiring individual administration, the number needing a word processor).

The database enhanced the level of communication and helped staff meet the record keeping requirements. It also reduced the time required to prepare for assessment accommodations, and the entire operation enjoyed increased efficiency.

During the Testing Session

Unanticipated problems and questions sometimes arise during the actual assessment. Examples include:

- What will we do if a staff member or student is absent?
- Do we have alternative rooms in case a problem occurs?
- What if the fire alarm rings during the testing session? How will it affect the schedule? What if it upsets the students who have emotional problems? Can we restart the testing after they calm down, or would it be better to finish the testing later?
- What if the tape recorders don't work?
- What if we have a power failure and students can't use the equipment?
- What if we have to reschedule the session?
- What if, due to absences of staff, we don't have enough people to provide accommodations?
- Who will walk the halls, answer staff questions, or run errands if teachers have problems?

Administrators should plan in advance to ensure that sufficient staff are available to facilitate accommodations during large-scale assessments. Following is an example of how a high school staff managed to creatively solve a dilemma.

King High School (a pseudonym) is a large school with close to 2,500 students. The state has just begun to require statewide testing.

At King, the general education teachers work with special educators who are assigned to each academic department. The special educators keep the teachers informed about accommodations and assist the teachers in adapting their lessons and making classroom accommodations.

State officials became concerned about test security and developed a policy prohibiting staggered testing schedules. Schools were told to administer all assessments on the same day.

As the special education and general education staff began to plan with the administrators for the test day, it became very clear that there were not enough staff members to assist with accommodations. The group began to brainstorm how to handle the situation. One suggestion was to have the special educators take small groups of students into conference rooms for testing because there were not enough classrooms available. However, there still were not enough teachers to deliver the accommodations. The principal contacted the nearby middle school and arranged to have those special educators come to the high school and assist students who required tape recorders or who needed to dictate answers.

The testing accommodations were completed successfully. The two schools agreed to assist each other whenever necessary for state testing.

Most people are familiar with Murphy's Law — if something can go wrong, it will! While it is a good idea to plan for possible problems, it also is important to understand that even with the best planning, there may be some glitches.

Here are some tips that may prove helpful in handling problems that may occur on assessment day:

- Have extra staff on stand-by.
- Have extra tape recorders and tapes.
- Have extra batteries for all devices that use them.
- Have extra copies of everything.
- Have extra blank answer sheets for students who require response accommodations.
- Have an alternate schedule planned for times, rooms, and people.
- Be in the building in case a major problem arises, or to accommodate any unannounced visitors.
- Check all equipment ahead of time and have extra parts on hand (e.g., bulbs for overhead projectors).

Obtaining the staff necessary to accommodate students with varying needs also can prove challenging. Solutions will depend on how each school is organized and staffed. Following is an example of how one middle school dealt with a very complex test administration requirement.

Samuels Middle School (a pseudonym) has 850 students. State assessments are performance-based measures that require one week of morning sessions to complete. The tasks are interdisciplinary, and they involve reading, cooperative group work, and independent writing. Some of the activities involve using manipulatives and even conducting experiments in groups. Students then write about their results and conclusions.

The assessments are administered at only one grade level. Students are assigned randomly by the state to testing groups which are completely heterogeneous in composition.

When the school staff received their testing groups, they found the state had spread the students who required accommodations among all of the groups. To complicate matters, the state required three totally separate versions of the test, called clusters, to be administered. This made for a total of 12 testing groups.

The state personnel told the school staff they could change some of the student groups, but they could not change their assigned clusters. The special educators, in collaboration with general educators, began to look at the groups. Since they could not pull students out of the groups and administer the test in small groups, they had to find a way to have the special educator join the group and provide accommodations in the classroom. They could pull the students out for writing tasks and assist with dictation in a separate setting, but they could not allow the students extra time until the daily session was completed. Students had to continually reenter their testing groups for the next activity, which might be a cooperative group or whole group demonstration.

The special educators and their general education partners in the testing groups met prior to the testing session to look at each cluster of activities and devise a plan. They consolidated the special education students into two of the four groups for each cluster. This meant that six groups required a special educator's presence. All of the special educators within the building were pulled from their regular duties to administer the test and provide the accommodations. Students were told the day before the testing that they would receive some accommodations within the groups and would be pulled out for others. This way the students knew what to expect.

The teachers and special educators within the groups worked as a team. Directions and activities were completed in the whole

group. Special educators pulled students out for accommodations during reading and writing exercises. Other classes were moved so the special educators could use rooms that were close to the main testing sites. Once the testing session was completed, the students were given a break to eat lunch. They returned to testing rooms to use their extra time for the sections they were unable to complete.

This type of accommodation was very difficult to organize and implement. It required staff to work very closely together. It had a significant impact on the entire school program for the week of testing, but it was effective in meeting the students' needs.

As this vignette illustrates, the assessment itself affects how some accommodations will be delivered. Many problems that arise will require the administrator to solve problems on the spot and to engage the staff in brainstorming solutions to dilemmas.

After the Assessment

Once the assessments have been administered, other important issues must be resolved. Consider the following examples:

- Who will sort tests and pack them for shipping?
- Who was absent, and when will the make-up session take place? Who will administer the tests?
- Were any students who require accommodations absent? Who will accommodate them?
- Who will complete the necessary paperwork accounting for all of the testing materials?
- Who will return all of the equipment to the proper location?
- Are paraeducators available to help with these tasks?

Conclusion

Planning assessment accommodations for the first time can seem overwhelming. As in most endeavors, good planning is the key to success. The principal must take the lead and set the tone. When tasks are delegated, the assignments must be clear. If no one knows who is doing a task, in all likelihood it is not being done. Remember, making assessment accommodations is a relatively new practice, so it helps to know who to call should you get into a bind. Keep a list of phone numbers and email addresses. In emergencies, they can be invaluable.

The suggestions in this guide are only a beginning. The entire process will vary greatly from school to school. Despite these differences, however, there is much to be learned from what other schools are doing. Talk to colleagues about their plans and use their good ideas to improve plans. Also, take a few minutes and review the frequently asked questions and answers in Figure 3G. Knowing in advance some of the issues that may arise will help you be even better prepared to support staff and parents.

Finally, it can be helpful to familiarize yourself with some of the more global

issues related to making assessment accommodations. Here are a few of the most often cited ones:

- **Appropriateness of standards measured in large-scale assessments.** Because many large-scale assessments are based on standards, the issue of appropriateness is a critical one for students with disabilities — especially since, according to the National Center on Educational Outcomes, fewer than 20 percent of states have included special educators in setting standards. Some people argue that providing students with disabilities with access to the general education curriculum is at the heart of this issue — if students are included in the general education curriculum, then their progress toward high standards must be assessed as part of the district's accountability system.
- **Accommodation policies and practices vary.** State-approved lists of accommodations vary — what is permitted in one state may be prohibited in another. Further, because many states contract with test development companies for their assessments, and because districts tend to use off-the-shelf tests, accommodation policies often are driven by test developers who typically do not have a thorough understanding of disability issues. Complicating the issue is the lack of research. States and districts lack information on strategies directed specifically at how to improve performance of students with disabilities on large-scale assessments.
- **Reporting policies and practices have varied.** Prior to IDEA '97, there were no national guidelines on how data should be reported, which made it impossible to make direct comparisons between results for students with disabilities between states and even within states. Accurate and consistent reporting of data is an essential step if schools are to be held accountable for the progress of students with disabilities. IDEA '97 addresses the frequency of reporting, detail and (dis)aggregation of data. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(17)(B) and 34 CFR §300.139]
- **Legal challenges.** The central legal consideration concerns protecting the rights of individual students while maintaining the validity of assessment tools used to measure student performance. Sometimes families and/or advocates for students feel that more accommodations should be provided than is called for in the IEP. It is important for school administrators to have a sound, written decision-making process in place that clearly defines what accommodations are allowed and what accommodations are not allowed on each test, and includes a rationale that everyone can understand.

The National Center on Educational Outcomes (**http://www.coled.umn.edu/NCEO**) has a number of excellent publications regarding state and national issues. A listing is available in the introduction of this toolkit.

If educators and policymakers are to know for certain what all students know and can do, they must measure the per-

formance of all students. Providing accommodations to students who need them increases the number of students with disabilities who can take district and state assessments and thus be included in the accountability system. Assessment accommodations move us one step closer to ensuring that all students achieve to high standards.

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Resources

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Amendments of 1997 (P.L. 105-17), 20 U.S.C. §1400 et. seq.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-112), 29 U.S.C. §794.

34 CFR Part 300 — Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to **Diane Switlick,** principal, and **Candace Cortiella,** parent, for their contributions to this section.

Figure 3G Frequently Asked Questions

Following are some of the most frequently asked questions from teachers and parents. The suggested responses are provided not as scripts, but rather as examples of the type of information an administrator may wish to share.

Questions From Teachers

Who will help me with this?

Talking points: Special educators and other related services personnel should be available when teachers are implementing large-scale assessments. In addition, these individuals should be available to assist teachers in implementing the assessment accommodations in classroom instruction. With regard to the use of paraeducators in making assessment accommodations, check state law. These individuals may be available to assist in gathering and preparing accommodations, and to help with general logistics.

Will these tests be too hard for the students who are in special education?

Talking points: Generally, assessments are challenging for all students. If students with disabilities are studying the general education curriculum, they should have all of the experiences necessary to successfully master the concepts that are tested. The assessment accommodations provided should help to compensate for the student's disability and allow the student to demonstrate what he or she knows.

A decision may be made not to include a student in a state or district-wide assessment if it is not appropriate for the child. If that is the case — and it is for a very small percentage of students (the National Center on Educational Outcomes estimates the figure as less than 15 percent of students with disabilities) — the district must administer an alternate assessment.

Section 300.138 requires the state or LEAs, as appropriate, to develop alternate assessments and guidelines for the participation of children with disabilities in alternate assessments for those who cannot participate in state and district-wide assessment programs. Alternate assessments need to be aligned with the general curriculum standards set for all students and should not be assumed appropriate only for those students with significant cognitive impairments. [64 Fed. Reg. at 12565-66 (12-Mar-1999)] All these decisions also must be accurately recorded and reported along with the test results. IDEA requires states to have alternate assessments in place by July 2000. [34 CFR §300.138(b)]

-continued-

Figure 3G Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

Will accommodations give some students an unfair advantage?

Talking points: Not if they are well selected. When accommodations are appropriately selected and implemented according to student need, they should not provide an unfair advantage. They should serve to compensate for the disability as much as possible, allowing the test to measure more accurately what the student knows and not to measure the impact of the disability.

Do teachers really have to do this?

Talking points: Yes. The requirement that students with disabilities be included in state and district-wide assessments was mandated in federal law — the ***Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997***, (IDEA). [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(17)(A) and 34 CFR §300.138(a)]

In addition to the legal mandate, there is ample rationale for including students with disabilities in state and district-wide assessments. Some of the most commonly cited reasons are:

- **To promote high expectations for the achievement of students with disabilities.** IDEA '97 places an emphasis on ensuring that students with disabilities have appropriate access to the general curriculum, that is, the same curriculum as for nondisabled students. Because large-scale assessments are used to ensure accountability of student learning, students with disabilities must be included in assessments so that we know whether they are making progress. If schools are held accountable for the progress of students without disabilities, they should be accountable for students with disabilities as well.
- **To obtain an accurate picture of student achievement statewide and nationwide.** Often this entails comparing school districts fairly to one another. This can't be done if one district includes all students in its assessments and other districts exclude students.
- **To make sure that students with disabilities are benefiting from general education reform.** Most educational and fiscal decisions in school systems and state education agencies are made based on assessment information. Students who are not assessed typically do not count in these decisions, even though the decisions that are made affect them.

Students with disabilities should be afforded the same opportunities to participate and progress as students without disabilities. Consistency is essential. If participation is not promoted in all aspects of the educational system (instruction, classroom assessments, large-scale assessments), it may be compromised in other systems as well.

- continued -

Figure 3G Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

Will our test scores go down?

Talking points: Overall averages at a district or school level may decrease if scores of students with disabilities are simply added into the mix. It is important to learn as much as you can about how scores are reported, how they are disaggregated for analysis, and how they will be interpreted.

How much time will it take to make assessment accommodations?

Talking points: Initially, it will take extra time to implement new procedures and participate in training. Once procedures are in place, the time requirement for planning should decrease.

Once in place, staff will spend some time preparing for annual assessments. However, if accommodations are considered part of instructional practice, this discussion should eventually become routine.

Are teachers required to use assessment accommodations in their daily instruction?

Talking points: Not unless the IEP calls for such accommodations. However, decisions about assessment accommodations should be representative of accommodations that are used in the classroom. For example, it is not fair to the student to expect that he or she will use an accommodation for the first time on the day of the large-scale assessment. Further, if a student needs an accommodation for assessment, then usually those accommodations transfer to similar types of tests (e.g., paper-and-pencil tests). Remember, not all classroom accommodations are allowed on district and state assessments. The IEP team will determine which accommodations are necessary for the large-scale assessments.

Questions From Parents

Why does my child have to take these tests?

Talking points: All children should be included in large-scale assessments to determine how well they are progressing in the general education curriculum and to measure how well the general education program and instructional services are serving their needs. Because most educational reform efforts in education are based on data, it is critical that all children's needs be among those considered.

- continued -

Figure 3G Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

Why can't my child have all accommodations?

Talking points: The purpose of assessment accommodations is to compensate as much as possible for a student's disability. That means the accommodation must be tied directly to an area of weakness or a manifestation of the disability. If accommodations are assigned according to need, this will equalize the child's chances of showing what he or she knows in the testing situation.

Some accommodations are not appropriate for all students and some could give a student an unfair advantage if the accommodation is provided in an area where the child has no significant problems. Moreover, too many accommodations or accommodations that a student does not need may actually interfere with a child's performance.

Will these scores become a part of my child's permanent record?

Talking points: The answer to this question differs from state to state and district to district. In most school systems, criterion-referenced tests are given that measure student achievement in the curriculum. Usually, these scores are contained in a child's record.

In some states, accountability assessments are given that are not reported as individual scores in the child's record. That is because the purpose of the tests is to measure effectiveness of the school or school system and not the child's individual growth.

Do children covered by Section 504 receive accommodations?

Talking points: Section 504 requires appropriate accommodations for students covered by Section 504 where necessary. [P.L. 93-112, 29 U.S.C. §794 and 34 CFR 104.4] Any appropriate accommodations should be written into the Section 504 plan.

- Base accommodations on individual student needs.
- Make sure that the accommodation is used routinely during classroom instruction. Keep in mind that unfamiliar accommodations may actually interfere with the student's performance.
- Select accommodations that the student is comfortable using.

Who decides what assessment accommodations will be used?

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) team identifies appropriate accommodations in the IEP, if necessary, for the student to participate in the assessment program. Parents are full and equal members of the IEP team. It is important that parents participate in the development of their child's IEP, including the decisions about assessment accommodations and modifications. A student's IEP must specify any individual modifications in the administration of state or district-wide assessments of student achievement. Or, it must specify if that assessment is not appropriate for the child; in which case, it must specify how the child will be assessed.

Find out when state or district-wide assessments will be given. Consider discussing any assessment accommodations and modifications for your child early in the IEP process.

For additional information about assessment accommodations and modifications, contact your school district, state department of education, or the parent training and information center in your state.

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Making Assessment Accommodations

A Guide for Families

accommodation

...The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA '97) requires that students with disabilities participate in general state and district-wide assessment programs with appropriate accommodations and modifications, where necessary. For a small number of students who cannot participate in general state and district-wide assessment programs, even with appropriate accommodations and modifications, states must have guidelines for conducting alternate assessments and must conduct those assessments beginning July 1, 2000.

As with all other major decisions about a child's special education program, parents are full and equal partners with the team that determines whether children with disabilities should take an assessment or part of an assessment with needed accommodations and modifications in test administration when their child participates in general state and district-wide assessment programs.

Why should students with disabilities be included in these assessments?

The majority of states use large-scale assessments (also called "tests") for students in public schools. These assessments are different from the individual evaluations used to determine the need for special education services.

Most large-scale assessments are used to show how students are performing against state standards and to hold schools accountable for student performance. Students with disabilities should be able to meet challenging content and performance standards. It is very important for students with disabilities to be included in these assessments. That way, the results of these assessments reflect the performance of all students, and the improvements brought about by the results will be enjoyed by all.

Some states require students to pass one or more state assessments in order to be promoted to the next grade or to receive a regular high school diploma.

In all cases, it is very important for parents to understand the school policies regarding their child's participation in large-scale assessments.

What are assessment accommodations?

Assessment accommodations and modifications help ensure that students with disabilities participate in general state and district-wide assessments by altering the way a student takes a test or how a test is administered. For example, accommodations are changes in:

- How the assessment is presented (such as large print or Braille).
- Where it is presented (such as individually or in a small group).
- The timing or scheduling of the assessment (such as extended time or multiple testing sessions).
- How students can respond (such as dictating answers or using a word processor).

An assessment accommodation does not alter the content of what is being tested or change the meaning of a student's score.

Each state's policy about the use of accommodations is different. Many states have guidelines that explain their policies on the use of accommodations and many states have a list of "approved accommodations." It is important for parents to obtain policies and/or guidelines on testing accommodations for students with disabilities in state and district-wide assessments.

What should parents know about making assessment accommodations?

Some common guidelines for requesting assessment accommodations are:

- Identify accommodations only if they are needed. Keep in mind that some students may not need them.
- Do not request accommodations that give the student an unfair advantage. For example, if the test measures a student's reading ability, then it would be inappropriate for the test to be read to the student.

- No pida adaptaciones que le darían al estudiante una ventaja injusta. Por ejemplo, si la prueba es para medir la habilidad de lectura del alumno, sería inapropiado que se le leyese la prueba.
- Tome como base las necesidades del niño al hacer las modificaciones.
- Cerciórese de que las adaptaciones se usan rutinariamente en el aula cuando al alumno le dan las instrucciones. Tenga presente que las adaptaciones con las que el alumno no esté familiarizado podrían interferir con los resultados que obtenga.
- Escoja las adaptaciones que le faciliten al alumno tomar la prueba.

¿Quién decide qué adaptaciones se harán al hacerle la evaluación?

El equipo del Programa de Educación Individualizada (Individualized Education Program) al cual nos referiremos con sus siglas inglesas IEP, determinarán las adaptaciones adecuadas que habrán de hacérsele al IEP para que el alumno participe en el programa de evaluación. Los padres colaboran total y equitativamente con el equipo del IEP. Es importante que los padres participen en la elaboración del IEP de su hijo. Esto incluye las decisiones concernientes a las adaptaciones y modificaciones que se le hagan a la evaluación. El IEP del alumno deberá especificar cualquier modificación particular que se haga en la evaluación de su rendimiento en escala estatal o de distrito, o deberá especificar si esa evaluación no es adecuada para el niño. En este caso deberá especificarse en el IEP de qué manera será evaluado el niño.

Averigüe cuándo se darán las evaluaciones estatales o las del distrito escolar. Desde que comience el IEP, discuta durante el proceso la posibilidad de que se hagan modificaciones y adaptaciones cuando le hagan evaluaciones a su hijo.

Para información adicional acerca de adaptaciones y modificaciones hechas a la evaluación, comuníquese con el distrito escolar de su localidad, con el departamento estatal de educación o con un centro estatal de información y adiestramiento para los padres.

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La Adaptación de las evaluaciones

Una guía para la familia

adaptaciones

En las enmiendas efectuadas en 1997 a la ley de educación para discapacitados — Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments — (IDEA '97) se exige que los estudiantes discapacitados de todos los estados y distritos escolares de la nación participen en programas generales de evaluación a los que se les hayan hecho las debidas adaptaciones y modificaciones. Las autoridades estatales deberán establecer normas alternas de evaluación para aquellos estudiantes que no puedan participar en dichos programas aunque ya les hubiesen hecho los cambios y ajustes pertinentes a sus programas generales de evaluación. Las evaluaciones deberán comenzar el día 1 de julio de 2000.

En la misma forma en que se hace con todas las decisiones importantes relacionadas con el programa de educación especial para menores, los padres colaborarán total y equitativamente con el equipo encargado de trazar los programas generales de evaluación en todo el estado y el distrito escolar. El equipo determina si al niño discapacitado se le harán evaluaciones completas o parciales y si será necesario hacerles ciertos ajustes y modificaciones a las pruebas para que éstas se acomoden a las necesidades del menor.

¿Por qué se debe incluir a los alumnos discapacitados en esas evaluaciones?

En la mayoría de los estados se les hacen evaluaciones en gran escala a los alumnos que asisten a las escuelas públicas. Las evaluaciones se conocen también con el nombre de "pruebas" (tests en inglés). Estas evaluaciones son diferentes a las que se hacen individualmente para determinar los servicios de educación especial que necesita el estudiante.

La mayoría de las evaluaciones en gran escala se usan para comparar los resultados que obtiene el alumno en la evaluación con las normas estatales. De esta manera se fomenta que las escuelas se responsabilicen por el rendimiento de los estudiantes. Los alumnos discapacitados deberán poder hacerle frente al contenido académico establecido y a las normas de rendimiento. Para los alumnos discapacitados es muy importante que los incluyan en estas evaluaciones. De esa forma los resultados de esas evaluaciones reflejarán el rendimiento de todos los estudiantes y todos se beneficiarán de las mejoras que surjan como consecuencia de los resultados obtenidos.

Es requisito de algunos estados que los estudiantes pasen una evaluación, o más de una, antes de pasarlos de grado o de concederles el diploma regular de high school.

En todos los casos es de suma importancia que los padres entiendan la posición de la escuela en cuanto a la participación de su hijo en evaluaciones de gran escala.

¿Qué se entiende por adaptaciones a la evaluación?

Las adaptaciones y modificaciones hechas a las evaluaciones ayudan a garantizar que los alumnos discapacitados participen en las evaluaciones estatales y de los distritos escolares porque reforman la manera en que el estudiante toma la prueba o el modo en que ésta se administra. Por ejemplo, las adaptaciones son cambios relacionados con:

- La forma en que se presenta la evaluación (ej. en letra grande o en Braille).
- Dónde se administra la prueba (ej. en una situación individual o en un grupo pequeño).
- La coordinación y secuencia cronológica (ej. se extiende el tiempo programado o se le da la prueba durante varias sesiones.)
- La forma en que el estudiante responde (ej. si dicta las contestaciones o si responde mediante un procesador de palabras.)

Las adaptaciones hechas a las evaluaciones no alteran el contenido de lo que se está probando ni cambia el significado del puntaje.

Las normas en cuanto a las adaptaciones varían de acuerdo con el estado. Muchos estados tienen directrices que explican su política en cuanto al uso de adaptaciones. Muchos estados tienen una lista de "adaptaciones aprobadas". Es importante que los padres obtengan copias de las normas y/o de las directrices relacionadas con las adaptaciones de las pruebas de evaluación de los estados y distritos escolares para alumnos discapacitados.

¿Qué deben saber los padres acerca de la elaboración de adaptaciones para la evaluación?

He aquí algunas normas de orientación para solicitar que se le hagan adaptaciones a la evaluación:

- Determine qué adaptaciones hay que hacer pero solamente las que sean necesarias. Tenga en mente que tal vez algunos estudiantes no necesitan que se hagan modificaciones.

SECTION 4

Staff Development Activities

A Guide for Facilitators

This section of the *Making Assessment Accommodations* toolkit presents suggestions and ideas for using the information in staff development sessions or small study groups and to assist practitioners who are working in collaboration with family members. There are many ways to use these activities for professional development. They include:

- **Self study.** Individuals may use the materials to learn and enhance their knowledge base. Individuals are encouraged to review the materials and discuss the information with colleagues.
- **Team study.** A growing trend in schools is to support teams of practitioners with like interests in developing their knowledge and skills in areas of special interest. The toolkit may be used in both informal and formal team meetings — including IEP teams, subject area departments, school improvement teams, or teacher and paraeducator collegial work groups — to enhance and extend knowledge. In this context, the toolkit can serve as a stimulus for teams to learn about assessment accommodations and to apply the knowledge to their own situations.
- **Staff or parent meetings.** Administrators or related services personnel may use the activities and tools in the context of staff meetings. For example, the videotape overview pro-

vides an excellent starting point for discussion about the issue. Handouts and blackline masters that can be used for overhead transparencies are at the end of this section.

- **Workshops.** Leaders may use the activities and tools in this section to create a professional development workshop for practitioners and families on making assessment accommodations. Suggestions and ideas are included that will help workshop leaders tailor the workshop to meet the individual needs of the group.
- **University courses.** Faculty members who work with preservice and inservice teachers, special service personnel, and administrators may use the materials in their courses. Suggestions and ideas are included that will help faculty members to tailor a workshop that meets the individual needs of their group.

The staff development activities in this section are designed for flexible use and should not be considered a cookbook.

Getting Started

Facilitating a successful professional development session requires careful planning. Following are some general suggestions for getting started and handling the logistics for the session:

- **Become familiar with the information.** Read through the information in previous sections of the toolkit. Section 1 (Introduction) presents an overview of the topic, Section 2 (Practitioner's Guide) provides a description of assessment accommodations, and Section 3 (Administrator's Guide) describes issues related to implementation. It is a good idea to be familiar with the information in all of these sections, since the activities here assume a basic understanding of them. For more information, refer to the references and resources listed at the end of Section 1. The web site for the IDEA Partnerships at The Council for Exceptional Children, located at **www.ideapractices.org**, is a particularly excellent source of information.
- **Read through the staff development activities in this section.** Although many more activities and tools than one leader can use at one time are available, it will be helpful to have a working knowledge of the range of possibilities.
- **Set date and time for the session.** Let participants know in plenty of time to put the session on their calendars. Send or post reminders as the date approaches.
- **Arrange for a place to meet.** Make sure the room will accommodate the number of participants you expect and that the space is accessible for participants with disabilities. If the activities call for overhead projectors or videotape players, be sure they are available and in working condition. Arrange for refreshments if desired.
- **Duplicate handouts and make overhead transparencies.** Provide enough materials for the participants expected. Also, consider making copies of all overheads for participants.

- **Arrive early to check that the room is ready and the equipment is working.** Allow enough time to make any last-minute adjustments that might be necessary to make the session run smoothly.

Planning the Session

There is no prescribed order for activities and no set time frame for conducting sessions. It is important to keep the participants' needs and skills in mind. Gauge the presentation to meet the group's level of experience. If a range of expertise exists among the group members, provide opportunities for participants to elaborate on successful experiences and to ask questions.

The following activities have been organized around topics covered in this toolkit. Topics covered include:

- What are assessment accommodations and why are they requested for some students?
- What types of assessment accommodations are available? What principles should guide decision making?
- How can administrators support staff with implementation?

Consider the group and the purpose of the session when selecting the topics you will cover. For example, if the topic of assessment accommodations is new to the group, it is advisable to begin with a substantive overview, followed by a discussion of accommodation types. If the group is very knowledgeable about the purpose of assessment accommodations, it might be better to spend the majority of time reviewing different accommodations and considering implementation issues. Figures 4A and 4B contain sample agendas.

To facilitate their use in staff development sessions, the activities in this section have been organized as follows:

- **Content presentation.** This subsection includes suggested topics and corresponding blackline masters for overhead transparencies and handouts. Facilitators are encouraged to keep the content presentations brief and intersperse presentations with questions and activities.
- **Warm-up activities.** These are designed to activate the participants' prior knowledge of the session and to motivate their involvement. Feel free to use any of the activities or supplement them with others. These activities should be used in conjunction with setting the agenda and making introductions for the session.
- **Application activities.** These activities are designed to assist participants in applying their knowledge and skills. Some activities can be completed in extended or follow-up sessions; others will require some field work. Feel free to use any of the activities or supplement them with others.

At the end of all sessions, facilitators will want to wrap-up the session and give participants a strategy for applying the information covered. At the very least, facilitators will want to thank participants for their time and leave them with a way to follow up the session (e.g., get answers to questions, find more information).

Figure 4A Sample Agenda for a One-Hour Overview

Welcome and Introductions — 5 minutes

Participant Introductions and Warm-Up Activity — 15 minutes

Presentation Overview: Define assessment accommodations, highlight IDEA, and explain rationale — 5 minutes

Show Videotape — 15 minutes

Discuss Videotape — 10 minutes

Next Steps: Questions and Closure — 10 minutes

Figure 4B Sample Agenda for a Half-Day Workshop

Welcome and Introductions — 5 minutes

Participant Introductions and Warm-Up Activity — 20 minutes

Presentation Overview: Define assessment accommodations, explain rationale, discuss IDEA — 15 minutes

Show Videotape — 15 minutes

Discuss Videotape — 10 minutes

Break — 10 minutes

Warm-Up Activity: Types of accommodations — 20 minutes

Presentation: Review types of accommodations, student needs, and examples — 20 minutes

Activity: Review guiding principles — 15 minutes

Break — 10 minutes

Warm-Up Activity: Implementation issues — 15 minutes

Presentation: Implementation issues — 15 minutes

Closure/Next Steps — 10 minutes

Permission

Permission is granted to make copies of handouts and overheads for workshop use. In addition, facilitators may want to make the information in Sections 2 and 3 available to participants.

What Are Assessment Accommodations and Why Are They Requested for Students?

Presentation Content

Key information (found in Section 1 of the toolkit, and in the introductions to Sections 2 and 3) includes a definition, discussion of the law, the rationale, and a description of who receives accommodations. Blackline masters that can be used as handouts and/or overhead transparencies are available for the following topics:

- Definition of assessment accommodation (Appendix 4A1).
- Overview of IDEA requirements (Appendix 4A2).
- Rationale for assessment accommodations (Appendix 4A3).
- The manner in which students will participate (Appendix 4A4).

Warm-Up Activities

Videotape

In this activity, participants watch the videotape overview contained in this toolkit and share their reactions.

Materials: Videotape and playback equipment.

Procedures: The video can be shown and reactions solicited from participants. Or, you may wish to structure participants' viewing in one of the following ways:

- Ask how many participants are familiar with and/or are using assessment accommodations. As participants watch the video, ask them to keep track of accommodations with which they are familiar and unfamiliar. Discuss findings.
- Ask participants to jot down a belief they hold about assessment accommodations. After the video, ask them if their opinion changed or was challenged in any way. Discuss reactions.
- Ask participants to jot down a concern about assessment accommodations and a benefit of assessment accommodations. After the video, ask them whether their concerns or stated benefits were addressed. Discuss reactions.

The Web

The purpose of this activity is to portray participants' prior knowledge and experience with assessment accommodations in a visual representation. This

activity can be done individually or in a group. Figure 4C presents a sample of a completed web.

Materials: You will need a blank overhead transparency or large piece of chart paper. The blackline master in Appendix 4A5 can be used either for preparing a transparency or a participant handout. An overhead projector is required if using an overhead.

Procedures: Explain to participants that they will be creating a web of their knowledge about assessment accommodations. Take several minutes and have them reflect on everything they know about assessment accommodations. Ask them, "What's the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of the term?"

Begin by drawing a large oval with the words "assessment accommodations" in the center. Ask the participants to contribute ideas describing their knowledge of the concept. As each participant contributes a word or phrase, write it on the web. If possible, try to organize the statements according to themes and associate certain words with these themes.

Debrief the activity. Ask participants to focus on what they know about assessment accommodations. This last step can be used as a transition to defining the term.

Variation: A variation of this activity is the use of a KWL chart. A KWL chart asks participants to make a list of what they know (K) (which is similar to the web activity), what they want to know (W), and at the end of the session, what they learned (L). Either an overhead or a flip chart can be used to record participants' responses.

What Is Your Opinion?

This activity focuses on dispelling myths about assessment accommodations. Participants will state their opinion for each statement, using a Likert scale (e.g., strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree).

Materials: Use the overhead in Appendix 4A6. As an option, provide a copy of the overhead for each participant. An overhead projector also will be needed.

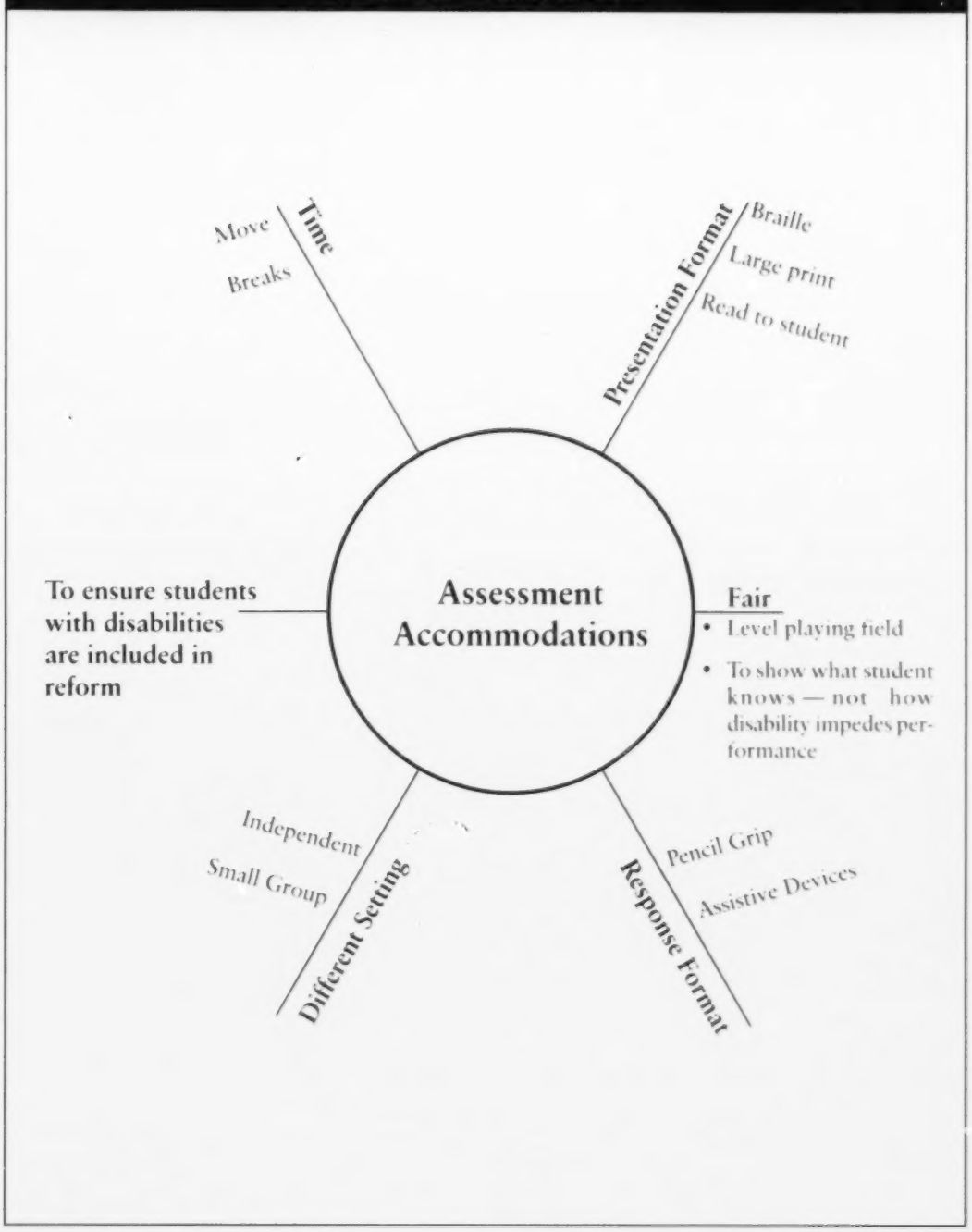
Procedures: Explain to the participants that you will show them several statements about assessment accommodations. Their challenge is to rate each statement according to an opinion scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree. They will have 5 seconds to respond to each statement.

Note that the statements in this exercise represent common reasons for not including students with disabilities in large-scale assessments. For example:

1) **State and district-wide assessments are too hard for students with disabilities.** When people present this argument, they are saying that the test is either too hard because the student has not learned the content (a curriculum issue related to what students are learning) or because the format presents difficulties (an accommodation issue).

2) **Students with disabilities who take large-scale tests will become frustrated.** When people present this argument, they are saying that a student will have test anxiety. There are three major reasons for test anxiety: the student is unfamiliar with the test format or the student does not have test-taking skills (both accommodation issues); or the student has not been taught or has not learned the content (a curriculum issue).

Figure 4C Sample Web



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3) **Assessment accommodations give students with disabilities an unfair advantage over other students.** When people present this argument, they are saying students do not need assessment accommodations.

4) **If students with disabilities are included, our test scores will go down and we will look bad.** When people present this argument, they are saying they have no faith that the district or state will use a fair reporting system. They also may be concerned that test scores will be used inappropriately.

Show the participants the first statement and complete the process. Debrief with the group. Ask participants to share their reasoning. From this point, you can make a natural transition into the presentation content.

True or False?

This activity focuses on dispelling myths about assessment accommodations. Participants will indicate whether they believe a statement is true or false.

Materials: Make handouts and/or an overhead transparency of the blackline master in Appendix 4A7. An overhead projector is needed.

Procedures: Explain to the participants that you will show them several statements about assessment accommodations. Their challenge is to determine if the statement is true or false. Either pass out the quiz to each participant or use the overhead and read the statement aloud.

The debriefing period offers an opportunity to share critical information and as such, makes a natural transition to the content presentation.

Answer Key:

1) If a student with disabilities participates in the district or statewide assessments, then he or she will no longer qualify for special education services. ***False***. There is no such law.

2) All students with disabilities must take all state and district-wide assessments. ***False***. The IEP team determines the appropriateness of the particular assessment for the student.

3) A student is allowed only one accommodation for state or district-wide tests. ***False***. IDEA places the responsibility for deciding who will participate in the assessment and with what appropriate accommodations with the IEP team. Any appropriate accommodations that a student needs must be included in the IEP.

4) Assessment accommodations when appropriately made give an advantage to students with disabilities. ***False***. If appropriately determined, an assessment accommodation does not give an advantage to a student. The purpose of an accommodation is to allow students with disabilities to show what they know without the impediment of the disability.

5) A frequently requested accommodation is to make the assessment content easier. ***False***. Accommodations are alterations in the way a test is given. The purpose of an accommodation is to allow students with disabilities to show what they know without the impediment of the disability.

6) The IEP team decides what, if any, accommodations a student needs. ***True***. IDEA places the responsibility for deciding who will participate in the as-

sessment with accommodations as necessary with the IEP team. Any appropriate accommodations that a student needs must be included in the IEP.

7) All students with disabilities require accommodations to participate in large-scale assessments. ***False.*** Some students with disabilities do not require accommodations.

8) If a child's IEP team determines that a particular state or district-wide assessment is not appropriate for the child, there are no requirements under IDEA for assessing that child's progress. ***False.*** If the IEP team determines that the child will not participate in a particular state or district-wide assessment of student achievement (or part of such assessment), the IEP must include a statement of why that assessment is not appropriate for the child. It also must explain how the child will be assessed. For students whose IEPs specify that they should not participate in regular assessments, the state must ensure development of guidelines for their participation in alternate assessments and develop and conduct alternate assessments by July 1, 2000. The National Center on Educational Outcomes estimates that fewer than 15 percent of students with disabilities typically fall into this category.

9) A student with disabilities is entitled to an assessment accommodation only if he or she is receiving special education services in the general education classroom. ***False.*** An eligible disabled student's right to appropriate assessment accommodations is not contingent on educational placement.

10) The ultimate decision of who participates (or doesn't participate) in large-scale assessments rests with the building administrator. ***False.*** Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) must include a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of state or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the student to participate in such assessments. If the IEP team determines that the child will not participate in a particular state or district-wide assessment of student achievement (or part of such assessment), the IEP must include a statement of why that assessment is not appropriate for the child. It also must explain how the child will be assessed.

Variation: As a variation when working with a large group, assign the participants to several teams and play "baseball." Draw a baseball diamond on the overhead or chart paper. Assign a symbol for each team. The first team "at bat" gets the first question. If that team is right, draw its symbol on first base. If the team is wrong, then Team 2 gets the base. Next, give a statement to Team 2 and repeat the process until one team scores a run.

Application Activities

Are Accommodations Fair?

The purpose of this activity is to engage participants in a discussion related to the fairness of assessment accommodations. Participants determine whether the proposed accommodation fulfills a

need or gives the student an unfair advantage.

Materials: The list of vignettes in Appendix 4A8. An overhead projector.

Procedures: Present the following example to participants:

> *Roberto wears glasses to see. He wears them during classroom instruction and at home while completing homework. Should he be allowed to wear his glasses during the assessment or would that give him an unfair advantage over his classmates?*

Most likely, participants will agree that wearing glasses does not create an unfair advantage. Explain that some accommodations are not as obvious — in fact some are controversial. Share the list of vignettes and invite participants' reactions.

Answer Key:

1) Due to a physical disability, eight year old Carla uses a computer with a spell checker to complete her work in class. For the statewide writing assessment, Carla's IEP team requests the use of the computer and spell checker. ***Issue:*** If the test is measuring language in usage and/or spelling, then the use of the spell checker might give Carla an unfair advantage. However, if the test is assessing a students' ability to organize ideas and write an essay, then the assistive devices most likely would be considered appropriate.

2) Jeremy has difficulty concentrating. He tires easily and has problems attending to the same task for long periods of time. Jeremy's IEP team requests that Jeremy be given the following accommodations: take the test in a setting away from his classmates; be given several breaks in addition to the regularly scheduled ones; and be prompted by the teacher when off task. ***Issue:*** As long as the teacher does not embed answers or help in the prompts, these accommodations would not provide Jeremy with an unfair advantage.

3) José uses a calculator during math lessons. The majority of the statewide mathematics test focuses on math problem solving, with several subtests measuring computation. The IEP team has requested the use of a calculator on the assessment. ***Issue:*** The calculator may be appropriate for the problem solving subtests, but definitely not for the computation subtests.

After you have worked through the vignettes, summarize the criteria that participants gave for whether the accommodation addresses a need or provides an unfair benefit. Use this summary as a transition to discussing need versus benefit.

A Guest Speaker

A guest speaker discusses personal experiences using or making assessment accommodations.

Materials: Audiovisual equipment for the presentation.

Procedures: Invite an individual (e.g., school psychologist, policymaker, advocate, individual with disability, university expert) to address the group. Ask the speaker to share his or her experiences with the topic.

Variation: Invite practitioners from a neighboring school district to discuss how they have implemented assessment accommodations. Encourage them to share the logistics from start to finish. Or, invite a policymaker from the state education office to explain policies.

What Types of Accommodations Are Available and What Principles Guide Decisions?

Content

Key information (found in Section 2 of this toolkit) should include the five categories of accommodations, examples of each, and the needs that each category of accommodation serves. There also should be a discussion regarding guiding principles for making assessment accommodations. Blackline masters that can be used as handouts and/or overheads are available for the following topics:

- Types or categories of accommodations (Appendix 4A9).
- Needs served by each category (Appendix 4A10).
- Examples of accommodations by category (Appendix 4A11).
- Guiding principles for making assessment accommodations (Appendix 4A12).

Warm-Up Activities

Brain Dump

The purpose of this activity is to find out what participants already know about types of accommodations.

Materials: Make handouts and/or an overhead transparency of the blackline master in Appendix 4A9. An overhead projector will be needed.

Procedures: This activity can be done in several ways. For example:

- Invite participants to generate a list of assessment accommodations. As they share their lists, record them under the specific category.
- Give participants the handout (which lists the five main categories) and have them work independently or in small groups and list as many examples as they can. Share with the entire group.
- Break the group into five subgroups and assign each a category: timing, scheduling, setting, presentation, or response. Ask each group to generate examples. Share with the entire group.

Debrief the activity by discussing the five categories of accommodations. Use this as a natural transition into a content presentation on accommodations.

I Am Familiar With That Assessment Accommodation

In this activity, participants rate each accommodation according to their familiarity with it.

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Materials: Make handouts and/or an overhead transparency of the blackline master in Appendix 4A13. Or use a form prepared by your district or state that lists various accommodations. An overhead projector will be needed.

Procedure: Pass out the checklist of accommodations. Ask participants to rate each accommodation using the following scale:

> *3 = I am very familiar (e.g., I know how to use it. I have experience using it.)*
>
> *2 = I am familiar (e.g., I know about it but have never used it. I have read about it. I have seen others use it.)*
>
> *1 = I am unfamiliar (e.g., I have never heard of it before.)*

Review the ratings. Note whether there are any trends (e.g., much familiarity with response accommodations but not with setting accommodations; much familiarity with teacher-presented accommodations but not with those that utilize assistive devices). If desired, follow this discussion with a presentation about different accommodations.

Application Activities

The Right Assessment Accommodation

In this activity, participants practice selecting accommodations for students.

Materials: Make handouts and/or an overhead transparency of the blackline master in Appendix 4A14. Or, have participants substitute actual student examples. An overhead projector will be needed.

Procedure: After reviewing the assessment accommodations and guiding principles, ask participants to role play making an assessment accommodation decision. Show the participants the cases or pass them out. Discuss results. If more than one group worked on a case, discuss the ways their decisions differ.

Skill Instruction

In this activity, participants who have used an accommodation instruct their colleagues in how to use it.

Materials: Descriptions of accommodations (use information from Section 2 of this toolkit).

Procedures: Prior to the session, ask for volunteers who have used accommodations either for assessment purposes or in the context of instruction to teach their colleagues how to deliver the accommodation. Encourage them to use the following procedure when sharing their knowledge:

- Describe the assessment accommodation. State it in concrete, observable actions.
- Model or demonstrate the assessment accommodation.
- Show participants how to instruct a student to use the assessment accommodation.
- Provide a practice opportunity in which participants role play teaching the accommodation to each other. As they practice, provide feedback.

Variation: Invite specialists (such as an assistive technology specialist, a speech and language specialist, an occupational

therapist, a physical therapist) to demonstrate assistive devices and tools.

Check Out Your State-Approved List of Accommodations

In this follow-up activity, participants review their state's approved list of accommodations.

Materials: State-approved list. Note: Many states have approved lists of accommodations and many states post current assessment information on their education agency's web site. Links to these web sites are available through the Council of Chief State School Officers' web site: **http://www.ccsso.org/seamenu.html.**

Procedures: Pass out the approved lists and have participants review them for completeness. Ask participants to respond to the following questions:

- Were there accommodations in each of the five categories?
- Were there sufficient accommodations to address most students' learning needs?
- Were accommodations not listed that students typically need?
- Were there accommodations on the list that were unfamiliar?

Review Policies to Guide Decisions About Accommodations

In this follow-up activity, participants review their policies for making decisions about assessment accommodations.

Materials: Make handouts and/or an overhead transparency of the blackline master in Appendix 4A12 (guiding principles). An overhead projector will be needed. Optional: Have participants bring copies of actual policies.

Procedures: Using the guiding principles (Appendix 4A12), ask participants to review their policies for completeness. If no formal policies exist, then ask participants to develop a policy statement. Share policies.

Variation: Ask participants to share the guiding principles with co-workers (e.g., IEP team, administrators, paraeducators, colleagues, school psychologists). Or, bring in a selection of policies from different districts and have participants analyze them for completeness.

How Can Administrators Support Staff With Implementation?

Content

Key information (found in Section 3 of this toolkit) should include a discussion of implementation tasks such as practitioner training, parent communication, and logistical support. Blackline masters that can be used as handouts and/or overheads are available for the following topics:

- Implementation tasks (Appendix 4A15).
- Topics for training (Appendix 4A16).
- Typically asked questions from parents (Appendix 4A17).

- Sample checklist for making assessment accommodations (Appendix 4A18).
- Logistics checklist (Appendix 4A19).

Warm-Up Activities

Review the Implementation Checklist

In this activity, participants review an implementation checklist and use it as a stimulus for discussing their own implementation plan.

Materials: Make handouts and/or an overhead transparency of the blackline master in Appendix 4A19. An overhead projector will be needed.

Procedure: Pass out the implementation checklist. Ask participants to review the list in the context of their own approach.

Use this as a stimulus for discussing implementation tasks. If time permits, invite participants to create an implementation plan for their assessment accommodation approach (see application activity in following section).

A Guest Speaker

A guest speaker discusses personal experiences using or making assessment accommodations. The emphasis should be on implementing policies and practices.

Materials: Audiovisual equipment for the presentation.

Procedures: Invite practitioners from a neighboring school district who have experience with making assessment accommodations to share how they organized and implemented their policies and approach and to share their experiences.

Application Activities

Develop an Implementation Plan

In this activity, participants design their implementation plan. This activity is designed for school-based teams who are preparing an implementation plan.

Materials: Generic planning form (optional) (Appendix 4A20).

Procedure: Ask participants to design a plan for implementing assessment accommodations. Encourage them to ask other stakeholders what they might need to implement assessment accommodations successfully. Encourage them to collect planning information about such issues as training needs for staff, family information needs, etc.

Variation: If working with classroom teachers or an IEP team, plan how accommodations will be implemented for a student or a group of students in a classroom.

Self-Assessment

The purpose of this activity is to engage participants in identifying areas of strength and needed supports.

Materials: None.

Procedures: Ask individuals or teams to brainstorm:

- The resources and talents they can draw from in planning implementation activities.

- What they might need to help them implement assessment accommodations.
- Have them make a list of their needs and another list of the supports/resources that might address those needs. Share lists and react.

What Will We Need?

In this activity, participants apply their knowledge to making accommodations for their own students. Using real students and accommodations, they generate implementation issues they must address.

Materials: Accommodations Checklist (Appendix 4A18) and Logistics Checklist (Appendix 4A19). Both are optional aids.

Procedures: Ask participants to bring to the session assessment accommodation information for students whom they serve. The information does not need to be exhaustive, but it should reflect actual accommodations that either are being considered or have been selected.

Have participants review their information from an implementation perspective. Ask them to respond to the following questions:

- What will you need to plan for at the beginning of the year?
- What will you need to plan for prior to the assessment?
- What will you need to plan for on the day of the assessment?
- What will you need to plan for after the assessment is completed?

If you are working with multiple groups, have each share the work with the entire group.

APPENDIX 4A1

Definition of Assessment Accommodation

Assessment accommodations alter the way a test is administered. They are designed to respond to a student need. They are not intended to give the student an unfair advantage. Students with disabilities may use assessment accommodations to show what they know without being impeded by their disabilities.

APPENDIX 4A2

IDEA Requirements

Including students with disabilities in large-scale assessment programs became a requirement in the 1997 Reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA). The law states:

- As a condition of eligibility, states must have policies and procedures to ensure that children with disabilities are included in general state and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations as necessary. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(17)(A) and 34 CFR §300.138(a)]
- Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) must include a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of state or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the student to participate in such assessments. [20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(1)(A)(v) and 34 CFR §300.347(a)(5)(i)]
- If the IEP team determines that the child will not participate in a particular state or district-wide assessment of student achievement (or part of such assessment), the IEP must include a statement of why that assessment is not appropriate for the child, and how the child will be assessed. [20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(1)(A) and 34 CFR §300.347(a)(5)(ii)]
- For students whose IEPs specify that they cannot participate in a regular assessment or part of an assessment, even with appropriate accommodations or individual modifications in test administration, the IEP must include a statement of why that assessment is not appropriate for the child, and how the child will be assessed. [20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(1)(A)(v)(II) and 34 CFR §300.347(a)(5)(ii)(A)-(B)] The state must ensure development of guidelines for their participation in alternate assessments and develop and conduct alternate assessments beginning July 1, 2000 for those children who cannot participate in state and district-wide assessment programs. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(17)(A)(i)-(ii) and 34 CFR §300.138 (b)(1)-(3)]
- States must have recording policies and procedures in place that ensure proper reporting of information regarding the performance of students with disabilities on large-scale assessments. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(17)(B) and 34 CFR §300.139]
- States must establish performance indicators that must promote the purposes of IDEA, are consistent, to the maximum extent appropriate, with other goals and standards for all children, established by the state, that must be used to assess progress toward achieving those goals that, at a minimum, address the performance of children with disabilities on assessments, drop-out rates, and graduation rates. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(16) and 34 CFR §300.137(b)]
- State reports to the public relating to assessments must include aggregated data and disaggregated data and must meet the timeline for disaggregation of data. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(17)(B) and 34 CFR §300.139(b)-(c)]

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APPENDIX 4A3

Rationale

- To provide an accurate picture of education. In order for district and statewide testing to give a complete measure of all students in a particular grade across a state, all of the students must be tested, and the scores for all of the students tested must be reported.

- To make accurate comparisons. In order for accurate comparisons to be made, all students must be included by all schools, districts, and states.

- To ensure that students with disabilities benefit from reforms. The results of large-scale assessments often are used to make state and district educational policy decisions about the curriculum or resource allocations.

- To meet legal mandates. The 1997 reauthorization of IDEA requires students to have appropriate access to the general curriculum, that is, the same curriculum as for nondisabled students, and to participate in large-scale assessments, with appropriate accommodations, where necessary.

APPENDIX 4A4

All Students with Disabilities Participate in One of the Following Ways:

- Some students with disabilities will participate in the same way as other students. They will take regular state or district-wide tests with no accommodations.
- Some students with disabilities will participate in regular assessments using accommodations to enable them to demonstrate their skills without the interference of their disabilities.
- A relatively small percentage of students with disabilities (estimated as fewer than 15 percent of students with disabilities) may need to participate in an alternate state or district-wide assessment because they cannot participate in the regular assessment, or part of the assessment, even with appropriate accommodations and modifications in test administration.

APPENDIX 4A5

Web

APPENDIX 4A6

Opinions About Assessment Accommodations

1) State and district-wide assessments are too hard for students with disabilities.

2) Students with disabilities who take large-scale tests will become frustrated.

3) Assessment accommodations give students with disabilities an unfair advantage over other students.

4) If students with disabilities are included, our test scores will go down and we will look bad.

APPENDIX 4A7

True or False?

___ 1) If a student with disabilities participates in the state or district-wide assessments, then he or she will no longer qualify for special education services.

___ 2) All students with disabilities must take all state and district-wide assessments.

___ 3) A student is allowed only one accommodation for state or district-wide tests.

___ 4) Assessment accommodations, when appropriately made, give an unfair advantage to students with disabilities.

___ 5) A frequently requested accommodation is to make the assessment content easier.

___ 6) The IEP team decides what, if any, accommodations a student needs.

___ 7) All students with disabilities require accommodations to participate in large-scale assessments.

___ 8) If a child's IEP team determines that a particular state or district-wide assessment is not appropriate for the child, there are no requirements under IDEA for assessing that child's progress.

___ 9) A student with disabilities is entitled to an assessment accommodation only if he or she is receiving special education services in the general education classroom.

___ 10) The ultimate decision of who participates (or doesn't participate) in large-scale assessments rests with the building administrator.

APPENDIX 4A8

An Unfair Advantage or a Need?

1) Due to a physical disability, 8-year-old Carla uses a computer with a spell checker to complete her work in class. For the statewide writing assessment, Carla's IEP team requests the use of the computer and spell checker.

2) Jeremy has difficulty concentrating. He tires easily and has problems attending to the same task for long periods of time. Jeremy's IEP team requests that Jeremy be given the following accommodations: take the test in a setting away from his classmates; be given several breaks in addition to the regularly scheduled ones; and be prompted by the teacher when off task.

3) José uses a calculator during math lessons. The majority of the statewide mathematics test focuses on math problem solving, with several subtests measuring computation. The IEP team has requested the use of a calculator on the assessment.

APPENDIX 4A9

Types of Assessment Accommodations

- **Timing — changes in the duration of testing.**
- **Scheduling — changes in when testing occurs.**
- **Setting — changes in the place where an assessment is given.**
- **Presentation — changes in how an assessment is given to a student.**
- **Response — changes in how a student responds to an assessment.**

APPENDIX 4A10

Needs Served

Timing:

- To provide extra time to read written text.
- To provide extra time to write responses.
- To provide extra time to use certain equipment.
- To help students with short attention spans stay on task.

Scheduling:

- To coordinate the assessment with the effects of medication.
- To help students who have low frustration tolerance.

Setting:

- To help students who have difficulty focusing attention in a group setting.
- To support other classmates who may be distracted by the accommodation.

APPENDIX 4A10

Needs Served (continued)

Presentation:

- To support students with sensory needs.
- To support students who have difficulty reading or understanding directions.

Response:

- To meet needs related to physical and sensory disabilities that limit the student's ability to respond.
- To help students who have memory, sequencing, directionality, alignment, organization, and other problems that may interfere with successful performance on tests.

APPENDIX 4A11

Examples of Accommodations

Timing

- Provide frequent breaks
- Extend time

Scheduling

- Schedule over several class periods or days
- Reverse the order of subtests
- Schedule during a specific time of day

Setting

- Allow preferential seating
- Take the test in a separate location
- Take the test in a small group
- Use a study carrel

APPENDIX 4A11

Examples of Accommodations (continued)

Presentation

- Use a Braille version of the test
- Use a large-print test
- Use large answer bubbles
- Include fewer items per page
- Read test and/or directions to student
- Provide the test on the computer
- Provide the test on audio cassette
- Sign the test and/or directions to the student
- Reread the directions
- Highlight key words or phrases
- Provide cues on the page (e.g., arrows, stop signs)
- Prompt the student to help him or her stay focused
- Clarify directions
- Answer questions

Examples of Accommodations (continued)

Presentation (continued)

- Provide extra examples
- Use templates to reduce visible print
- Use markers to maintain place
- Secure paper to desk
- Use magnifying or amplification devices

Response

- Allow the student to mark in the test booklet
- Allow the student to make a verbal response
- Scribe answers for a student
- Use pencil grips
- Use special paper
- Use assistive devices and tools
- Allow the student to point to answers

APPENDIX 4A12

Guiding Principles

Do not assume that every student with disabilities needs assessment accommodations. Accommodations used in assessments should parallel accommodations used in instruction.

Obtain approval by IEP team. The IEP team, including the student's parent, must determine whether the student will need accommodations or modifications to participate in the assessment of the student, and if so, the kinds of accommodations that would be appropriate for the student.

Base accommodations on student need. Accommodations should respond to the needs of the individual student and not be disability-specific. Do not base accommodations on educational program placement (e.g., percentage of time the student spends in the general education classroom). While students with the same disability may tend to need the same kinds of accommodations, this is not a sound basis for making decisions.

Be respectful of the student's cultural and ethnic background. When suggesting an accommodation, make sure the student and his or her family are comfortable with it. When working with a student who has limited English proficiency, consider explaining the assessment in his or her primary language.

Integrate assessment accommodations into classroom instruction. Never introduce an unfamiliar accommodation to a student during an assessment. Preferably, the student should use the accommodation as part of regular instruction. At the very least, the student should have ample time to learn and practice using the accommodation prior to the assessment.

- continued -

APPENDIX 4A12

Guiding Principles (continued)

Know whether your state and/or district has an approved list of accommodations. Although the ultimate authority for making decisions about accommodations rests with the student's IEP team, many states and districts have prepared a list of officially-approved accommodations. These lists vary widely from district to district or state to state. Generally, there are different documentation procedures depending on whether the accommodation is or is not found on the state-approved/district-approved list. Practitioners and families should consider the state laws and district policies.

Plan early for accommodations. Begin consideration of assessment accommodations long before the student will use them, so that he or she has sufficient opportunity to learn and feel comfortable.

Include students in decision making. Whenever possible, include the student in determining an appropriate accommodation. Find out whether the student perceives a need for the accommodation and whether he or she is willing to use it. If a student does not want to use an accommodation (e.g., it is embarrassing or it is too cumbersome to use), the student probably will not use it.

Understand the purpose of the assessment. Select only those accommodations that do not interfere with the intent of the test. For example, if the test measures calculations, a calculator would provide the student with an unfair advantage. However, if the math test measures problem-solving ability, a calculator may be appropriate. Similarly, reading a test to a student would not present an unfair advantage unless the test measures reading ability.

- continued -

APPENDIX 4A12

Guiding Principles (continued)

Request only those accommodations that are truly needed. Too many accommodations may overload the student and prove detrimental. When suggesting more than one accommodation, make sure the accommodations are compatible (e.g., do not interfere with each other or cause an undue burden on the student).

Determine if the selected accommodation requires another accommodation. Some accommodations — such as having a test read aloud — may prove distracting for other students, and therefore also may require a setting accommodation.

Provide practice opportunities for the student. Many standardized test formats are very different from teacher-made tests. This may pose problems for students. Most tests have sample tests or practice versions. While it is inappropriate to review the actual test with the student, practice tests are designed for this purpose. Teach students test-taking tips, such as knowing how much time is allotted and pacing oneself so as not to spend too much time on one item. Orient students to the test format or types of questions. For example, on multiple-choice tests, encourage students to read each choice carefully, eliminate the wrong choices, and then select their answer.

Remember that accommodations in test taking won't necessarily eliminate frustration for the student. Accommodations allow a student to demonstrate what he or she knows and can do. They are provided to meet student needs, not to give anyone an unfair advantage. Thus, accommodations will not in themselves guarantee a good score for a student or reduce test anxiety or other emotional reactions to the testing situation. Accommodations are intended to level the playing field.

APPENDIX 4A13

Accommodations

- Provide frequent breaks
- Extend time
- Allow unlimited time
- Schedule test over several periods or days
- Reverse the order of subtests
- Schedule test during a specific time of day
- Provide preferential seating
- Take the test in a separate location
- Take the test in a small group
- Use a study carrel
- Use a Braille version of the test
- Use a large-print test
- Use large answer bubbles
- Present fewer items per page
- Read test and/or directions to student

APPENDIX 4A13

Accommodations (continued)

- Provide the test on the computer
- Provide the test on audio cassette
- Sign the test and/or directions to the student
- Reread the directions
- Highlight key words or phrases
- Provide cues on the page (e.g., arrows, stop signs)
- Prompt the student to help him or her stay focused
- Clarify directions
- Answer questions
- Provide extra examples
- Use templates to reduce visible print
- Use markers to maintain place
- Secure paper to desk

APPENDIX 4A13

Accommodations (continued)

- Use magnifying or amplification devices
- Allow the student to mark in the test booklet
- Allow the student to make a verbal response
- Scribe answers for student
- Use pencil grips
- Use special paper
- Use assistive devices and tools
- Allow the student to point to answers

APPENDIX 4A14

What Accommodations Does This Student Need?

1) LaTisha is an eleventh grader who has been receiving special education services for learning disabilities. She is reading at a fifth grade level and has poor written language skills. Although she has very creative ideas and likes to express herself verbally, her writing is hampered by poor mechanical skills (e.g., spelling, punctuation). She has excellent auditory comprehension. Her attention to task is above average.

Assessment: Statewide Writing Achievement Test

Justification for Accommodations:

Timing:

Scheduling:

Setting:

Presentation:

Response:

APPENDIX 4A14

What Accommodations Does This Student Need? (continued)

2) Nicholas is an eighth grader who has neurological difficulties. He has hand tremors and is slow to finish assignments. He reads at grade level and enjoys group discussions.

Assessment: Statewide Mathematics Achievement Test

Justification for Accommodations:

Timing:

Scheduling:

Setting:

Presentation:

Response:

APPENDIX 4A14

What Accommodations Does This Student Need? (continued)

3) Karen is a fourth grader with limited reading ability. As a result of her medication (prescribed for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), she is more alert in the morning than in the afternoon. She has difficulty keeping papers and supplies in her desk area, loses attention easily, and has a tendency to move around frequently.

Assessment: Statewide Reading Achievement Test

Justification for Accommodations:

Timing:

Scheduling:

Setting:

Presentation:

Response:

APPENDIX 4A15

Implementation Tasks

- Developing a plan.
- Designing staff training.
- Ensuring parent involvement.
- Handling logistics.

APPENDIX 4A16

Suggested Workshop Topics

Staff Awareness Workshops

- Defining assessment accommodations.
- Discussing the purpose of these accommodations.
- Dispelling myths about accommodations.
- Sharing examples of accommodations that are currently being used by staff.
- Understanding the difference between a need and a benefit.
- Discussing in grade level teams or departments what accommodations are suggested for classroom instruction.
- Presenting and asking for input on documentation and communication procedures.
- Defining responsibilities for all staff members.
- Presenting periodic updates in accommodations information and procedural changes.
- Sharing positive practices within the school that are related to accommodations.
- Discussing assessment accommodations with families and advocates.

APPENDIX 4A16

Suggested Workshop Topics (continued)

Suggested Topics for Skill Training Workshops

- How to deliver all state- or district-approved accommodations.
- All required documentation procedures.
- Explicit methodology related to certain accommodations. For example: when a test is read, it must be verbatim; if a student dictates a response, there can be no prompting or asking questions for clarification; when transcription is done, it must be word for word; if directions are repeated, they must be verbatim with no other explanation; tape recording of the test must be verbatim.
- Time for staff to ask questions while the experts are present. For example: Can students use dictionaries? If a child uses a word processor, can he or she use spell check? If a student has an accommodation to mark directly in a test booklet, how will that book be packaged for return and scoring?
- Names and phone numbers of persons to contact if questions should arise.
- How and where specialized materials or services can be obtained (for example, large print or Braille materials, interpreters for signing).

APPENDIX 4A17

Typically Asked Questions from Parents

- What is the purpose of these assessments?
- How do states use the results of these assessments?
- Why should students with disabilities be included in these assessments?
- What are assessment accommodations?
- Who decides what assessment accommodations will be used?

APPENDIX 4A18

Accommodations Checklist

Student Name:_____ Grade:____ Date:_____

Test accommodations should be recommended for a student with a disability if the disability will interfere with the student's ability to complete the required assessments. Identified accommodations must align with the student's specific areas of educational impact as documented in the student's IEP.

Setting Accommodations

- ❒ Preferential seating
- ❒ Taking the test in a separate location
- ❒ In a small group with staff support
- ❒ Individual administration
- ❒ Other as specified in student IEP_____

Scheduling Accommodations

- ❒ Scheduled over several class periods or days
- ❒ Reverse the order of subtests
- ❒ Scheduled during a specific time of day
- ❒ Other as specified in student IEP_____

Time Accommodations

- ❒ Frequent breaks
- ❒ Extended time
- ❒ Other as specified in student IEP_____

Presentation Accommodations

- ❒ Large print or Braille test materials
- ❒ Sign language interpreter, amplification, or visual display
- ❒ Clarifying directions
- ❒ Verbatim audiotaped directions
- ❒ Verbatim audiotaped presentation of entire test
- ❒ Verbatim reading of entire test or selected portions
- ❒ Other as specified in student IEP_____

Response Accommodations

- ❒ Mark answers directly in the test booklet or on test paper
- ❒ Student indicates answers by pointing or other method
- ❒ Student dictates response to staff member or tape records answers
- ❒ Other as specified in student IEP_____

APPENDIX 4A19

Logistics Checklist

At the Beginning of the Year

- ❒ Review the knowledge base of IEP team members to ensure they have sufficient understanding of assessment accommodations. For example, if a general education teacher is assigned to a team, he or she may need to be brought up to speed regarding accommodations. Or if a school psychologist is new to the building, he or she may appreciate a briefing on school practices.
- ❒ Review any new requirements from the state or the district that will affect the decision to request an accommodation or to document the process. Make the appropriate revisions in any current practices and communicate those changes to all involved parties.
- ❒ Plan ways to present assessment accommodation information to new parents.
- ❒ Provide training to new staff members who are not familiar with assessment accommodations.
- ❒ Arrange for special educators to meet with staff and provide teachers with accommodation information for all of their students.
- ❒ Reinforce with teachers the importance of making classroom accommodations for students with disabilities.

Prior to the Test Date

- ❒ How are accommodations documented in the student's file? Are the appropriate forms present in all files?
- ❒ Who will send letters to parents detailing their child's accommodations?
- ❒ How will the teachers administering the tests know which students should receive what accommodations in the testing situation?

- continued -

APPENDIX 4A19

Logistics Checklist (continued)

Prior to the Test Date (continued)

- ❒ Who is available to fill in if a teacher is absent? (Note: In some states substitutes and paraeducators cannot administer tests.)
- ❒ Who will be responsible for making accommodations during the testing session?
- ❒ Who will be responsible for obtaining large print, Braille, or other specialized materials? Have paraeducators been informed of any related responsibilities?
- ❒ Do any students need to listen to tape recorded materials or dictate into a tape recorder? If so, where will they go, and who will accompany them?
- ❒ Who will be available to take students' dictation?
- ❒ How many students require calculators? Are there enough available? Are backup strategies in place?
- ❒ How many students require the use of a word processor? Are enough available? Is a computer lab available for their use?
- ❒ How many students need a small-group setting? How many rooms will be needed? Where will they meet? Who will be in charge? Are enough staff members available to cover all the sites?
- ❒ Which students require individual testing? When will they be tested, by whom?
- ❒ What is the testing schedule? Does testing fall at an appropriate time for those students with test scheduling needs (e.g., morning only)? Can alternative sessions be planned? Who will supervise the students?
- ❒ Is a room available for students who require extended time? How does this affect the lunch schedule?

- continued -

APPENDIX 4A19

Logistics Checklist (continued)

During the Testing Session

- ❒ What will we do if a staff member or student is absent?
- ❒ Do we have alternative rooms in case there is a problem?
- ❒ What if the fire alarm rings during the testing session? How will it affect the schedule? What if it upsets the students with emotional problems? Can we restart the testing after letting them calm down?
- ❒ What if the tape recorders don't work?
- ❒ What if we have a power failure and students can't use the equipment? What if we have to reschedule the session?
- ❒ What if, due to absences of staff, we don't have enough people to provide accommodations?
- ❒ Who will walk the halls, answer staff questions, or run errands if teachers have problems?

After the Assessment

- ❒ Who will sort out tests and pack them for shipping?
- ❒ Who was absent, and when will the make-up session take place? Who will administer the tests?
- ❒ Were any students who require accommodations absent? Who will accommodate them?
- ❒ Who will complete the necessary paperwork accounting for all of the testing materials?
- ❒ Who will return all of the equipment to the proper locations?

Assessment Accommodations

Year _____ to _____ Plan for _____

Goal _____

Objective _____ Reviewed _____

_____ Date _____

Actions	By Whom	Proposed Completion Date	Evaluation Method

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